United Nations A/68/318

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 August 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 68 of the provisional agenda*
Right of peoples to self-determination

Right of peoples to self-determination

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 67/157, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request.

The report outlines the relevant jurisprudence of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the treaty-based human rights norms relating to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination. It also provides a summary of the developments relating to the consideration by the Human Rights Council of the subject matter, including by its special procedures and the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

* A/68/150.

13-42716 (E) 030913

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/157, reaffirmed the importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights. The Assembly welcomed the progressive exercise of the right to self-determination by peoples under colonial, foreign or alien occupation and their emergence into sovereign statehood and independence.

2. The present report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the resolution, in which the General Assembly requested the Human Rights Council to continue to give special attention to the violation of human rights, especially the right to self-determination, resulting from foreign military intervention, aggression or occupation, and with paragraph 6, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the question at its sixty-eighth session.

3. The report provides a summary of the main developments relating to the realization of the right to self-determination within the framework of the activities of the United Nations human rights mechanisms since the submission of the last report (A/67/276). This includes concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights based on their consideration of the periodic reports submitted by the States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in respect of the implementation of the right to self-determination guaranteed in article 1 of the two Covenants.

4. The report also incorporates the consideration of the question by the Human Rights Council, including observations made in reports submitted to the Council by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Finally, it summarizes the conclusions regarding implications of Israeli settlements on the rights of Palestinians to self-determination reached by the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, established by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 19/17.

II. Human Rights Committee and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

5. Article 1, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and article 1, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirm the right of all peoples to self-determination. Article 1, paragraph 2, of the two Covenants affirms a particular aspect of the economic content of this right, namely the right of peoples, for their own ends, to "freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic cooperation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law". It further provides that "[i]n no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence". Article 1, paragraph 3, of the two Covenants imposes upon States parties, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust

Territories, the obligation to promote the realization of the right to self-determination and to respect it, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular with Article 1, paragraph 2.

6. The right to self-determination has been addressed by the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in their consideration of States parties' periodic reports submitted respectively under article 40 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The relevant concluding observations adopted during the period under review are highlighted below.

A. Concluding observations by the Human Rights Committee

7. During the reporting period, the Human Rights Committee addressed several issues related to the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples in Belize, Kenya and Peru.

8. In its concluding observations on the report of Kenya, the Committee expressed concern at reports of forced evictions, interference and dispossession of ancestral land by the Government from minority communities, such as the Ogiek and Endorois communities, who depend on it for economic livelihood and to practise their cultures. The Committee recommended that, in planning its development and natural resource conservation projects, the State party respect the rights of minority and indigenous groups to their ancestral land and ensure that their traditional livelihood that is inextricably linked to their land is fully respected. In this regard, the State party should ensure that the inventory being undertaken by the Interim Coordinating Agency with a view to obtaining a clear assessment of the status and land rights of the Ogiek community be participatory and that decisions be based on free and informed consent by the community (CCPR/C/KEN/CO/3, para. 24).

9. In its concluding observations on Belize in the absence of a report, the Committee advised the State party to provide information on allegations that it had not been complying with decisions of the Supreme Court with regard to Mayan land. The State party should desist from issuing new concessions for logging, parcelling for private leasing, oil drilling, seismic surveys and road infrastructure projects in Mayan territories without the free, prior and informed consent of the relevant Mayan community (CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1, para. 25).

10. In its concluding observations on the report of Peru, the Committee welcomed the adoption of the Law on the Right of Indigenous or Original Peoples to Prior Consultation (No. 29785). The Committee remained uncertain, however, about which indigenous communities would be entitled to be consulted. While noting that the Law required prior consent before indigenous peoples were transferred from their lands and before storage or handling of dangerous materials occurred, the Committee was concerned that legislation in force did not provide for free, prior and informed consent of indigenous communities concerning all measures which substantially compromise or interfere with their culturally significant economic activities. The Committee therefore recommended to the State party that it ensure that free, prior and informed consent of indigenous communities is obtained before adopting any such measures (CCPR/C/PER/CO/5, para. 24).

B. Concluding observations by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

11. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights addressed relevant aspects of the right to self-determination and the rights of indigenous peoples in its concluding observations on Denmark, Ecuador and the United Republic of Tanzania.

12. In its concluding observations on the report of Ecuador, the Committee reiterated its concern about the failure to undertake consultations as a basis for obtaining the prior, freely given and informed consent of indigenous peoples and nationalities for natural resource development projects that affect them. It was particularly concerned by the fact that Executive Decree No. 1247 of August 2012 was issued without having consulted indigenous peoples and nationalities and that the decree stipulated that any agreements which may be reached must be based on pre-existing public policy measures. The Committee was also concerned that the objectives of the State party's efforts to disseminate information, establish permanent consultative offices and organize tours through areas surrounding proposed mining and hydrocarbons development project sites were confined to the socialization of those projects and that those activities failed to engender an intercultural dialogue that would serve as a basis for obtaining the consent of indigenous peoples and nationalities and respecting their right to be consulted (E/C.12/ECU/CO/3, para. 9).

13. The Committee urged the State party to engage in consultations regarding mining and hydrocarbon resource exploration and development that allowed the peoples and nationalities concerned to freely decide whether or not to give their consent for a given project and that provided sufficient opportunities and time for deliberation and decision-making, as well as for the implementation of cultural safeguards and compensatory remedies. The Committee maintained that such consultations should be conducted in accordance with the community consultation procedures that had been developed and with the resulting decisions. It recommended that the State party consider suspending the implementation of Executive Decree No. 1247 of 2012 and that it instead work with indigenous peoples to design legislative measures to govern the exercise of the right to be consulted and that it then hold prior consultations on the proposed legislation. Finally, the Committee urged the State party to comply with the ruling of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of 27 June 2012 in the case of *Kichwa de Sarayaku v. Ecuador* (E/C.12/ECU/CO/3, para. 9).

14. In its concluding observations on the report of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Committee expressed concern about forced evictions of vulnerable communities, including pastoralist and hunter-gatherer communities, from their traditional lands, which had resulted in a critical reduction in their access to land and natural resources, threatening their livelihoods in particular. The Committee advised that the establishment of game reserves, the granting of licences for hunting and other projects on ancestral lands be preceded by free, prior and informed consent of the people affected (E/C.12/TZA/CO/1-3, para. 22).

15. In its concluding observations on the report of Denmark, the Committee recommended that the State party take steps to recognize the Thule Tribe of Greenland as a distinct indigenous community capable of vindicating its traditional rights (E/C.12/DNK/CO/5, para. 21).

III. Human Rights Council

A. Resolutions

16. At its twenty-second session, held from 25 February to 22 March 2013, the Human Rights Council considered the question of the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination under agenda item 7 and adopted resolution 22/27 on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. In that resolution, the Council reaffirmed the inalienable, permanent and unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to live in freedom, justice and dignity, and to establish their sovereign, independent, democratic and viable contiguous State. The Council also urged all Member States and relevant bodies of the United Nations system to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination.

B. Special procedures

17. In his report to the twenty-third session of the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 noted among several recent general developments the fact that on 29 November 2012 the General Assembly voted to recognize Palestine as a non-member observer State. In his opinion, such status is a step on the path to the realization of the collective and inalienable right of self-determination that belongs to the Palestinian people as a whole (A/HRC/23/21, para. 4). He further reported that the unlawful Israeli annexation and demographic manipulations in East Jerusalem had created fundamental threats to the Palestinian right of self-determination and proposed that the International Committee of the Red Cross convene an international conference to draft a convention for occupations that surpass five years or that the manifold issues related to prolonged occupation be examined by a commission of inquiry composed of relevant international law experts (A/HRC/23/21, para. 5 (c)).

18. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples regularly addresses the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples in his reports to the Human Rights Council. In his report presented at the twenty-first session he recalled that the right to self-determination, which is affirmed for indigenous peoples in article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, was a foundational right, without which the full range of indigenous peoples' human rights, both collective and individual, could not be fully enjoyed. Enhancing indigenous self-determination was conducive to successful practical outcomes; studies had shown that indigenous peoples who effectively managed their own affairs tended to fare better across a range of indicators than those who did not (A/HRC/21/47, para. 29).

19. He argued that tackling violence against indigenous women must in some way go along with advancing indigenous peoples' self-determination (A/HRC/21/47, para. 29) and suggested three specific ways in which indigenous self-determination may be enhanced in the context of combating violence against women and girls. Firstly, States should avoid responses to social problems affecting indigenous communities, including violence against women, that tend to limit, undermine or replace indigenous peoples' own authority and self-governance as these ran the risk

of undermining indigenous self-determination and had been shown to be less effective long-term solutions, generally speaking, in comparison to initiatives that indigenous peoples themselves control (A/HRC/21/47, paras. 30 and 31). Secondly, States should increase indigenous peoples' own participation in the design, delivery and oversight of programmes related to preventing and punishing violence against women (ibid., para. 32). Thirdly, indigenous peoples themselves needed to continue to strengthen their own organizational and local governance capacity and their own justice institutions to meet the challenges faced by their communities (ibid., para. 33).

20. He further placed the right of indigenous peoples to set and pursue their own priorities for development, including development of natural resources, as part of their fundamental right to self-determination among the primary substantive rights of indigenous peoples that may be implicated in natural resource development and extraction (ibid., para. 50). He noted that there was a fundamental problem with the current model of natural resource extraction in which the plans are developed with little or no involvement of the affected indigenous community or peoples concerned, and in which the corporation is both in control of the extractive operation and the primary beneficiary of it (ibid., para. 86). He suggested that a new model more conducive to indigenous peoples' self-determination and their right to pursue their own priorities of development is needed, noting that direct negotiations between companies and indigenous peoples may be the most efficient and desirable way of arriving at agreed-upon arrangements for the extraction of natural resources within or near indigenous territories that are fully respectful of indigenous peoples' rights, and they may provide indigenous peoples with opportunities to pursue their own development priorities (ibid., para. 50).

21. In the addendum to his report, on the situation of indigenous peoples in the United States of America, the Special Rapporteur observed that the overall thrust of the policy underlying the federal legislation and programmes adopted in the last few decades — a policy of advancing indigenous self-determination and development with respect for cultural identity — was generally in line with the aspirations expressed by indigenous peoples. The problems signalled were that the laws and programmes did not go far enough to meet those aspirations and that they were underfunded or inadequately administered (A/HRC/21/47/Add.1, para. 71). He also recalled that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples marked a path towards remedying the injustices and inequitable conditions faced by indigenous peoples, calling on determined action to secure their rights, within a model of respect for their self-determination and distinctive cultural identities (ibid., para. 79).

22. Issues of self-determination are also considered in the communications sent, replies received and follow-up by the Special Rapporteur (see, for example, A/HRC/21/47/Add.3, case No. CAN 3/201 on the situation of the Attawapiskat First Nation and case No. FIN 1/2012 on the situation of the alleged diminishment of Sami self-determination resulting from a decision by the Finland Supreme Administrative Court.

C. Independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem

23. When examining the implications of Israeli settlements on the rights of Palestinians, the fact-finding mission also examined their implications on the right of Palestinians to self-determination. The mission noted that the Government of Israel had full security and administrative control over the settlement areas, and effectively controlled the external borders of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Regional councils composed exclusively of representatives of Israeli settlers exercised planning functions in settlement areas. Neither the Palestinian Authority nor local Palestinian communities had any control over the governance, administration and planning of those areas (A/HRC/22/63, para. 35).

24. It further noted that the settlements, including the associated restrictions, impeded Palestinian access to and control over their natural resources. Eighty-six per cent of the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea was under the de facto jurisdiction of the settlement regional councils. Settlements exploited mineral extraction and fertile agricultural lands, denying Palestinians access to their natural resources (ibid., para. 36).

25. The fact-finding mission also pointed out that the negative impact of Israeli settlements on the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people extended to the Palestinian people as a whole (ibid., para. 37). The mission considered that the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including the right to determine how to implement self-determination, the right to have a demographic and territorial presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the right to permanent sovereignty over natural resources, is clearly being violated by Israel through the existence and ongoing expansion of the settlements (ibid., para. 38).

26. The fact-finding mission concluded that the establishment of the settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, was a mesh of construction and infrastructure leading to a creeping annexation that prevented the establishment of a contiguous and viable Palestinian State and undermined the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (ibid., para. 101). The mission considered that, with regard to the settlements, Israel was committing serious breaches of its obligations under the right to self-determination and certain obligations under international humanitarian law, including the obligation not to transfer its population into the Occupied Palestinian Territory (ibid., para. 104). Finally, the mission concluded that the right to self-determination was being violated consistently and on a daily basis (ibid., para. 105).

IV. Conclusion

27. **The right of self-determination is enshrined in article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. During the reporting period, the human rights treaty bodies, and the Human Rights Council, including special procedures mandate holders, have continued to address issues related to the realization of this right.**

United Nations A/68/319

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 August 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 69 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to present to the members of the General Assembly the report on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights, Marzuki Darusman, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/181.

* A/68/150.

13-42738 (E) 040913

Please recycle

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Summary

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Marzuki Darusman, provides an overview of the latest development concerning human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since the submission of his previous report to the General Assembly (A/67/370).

I. Introduction

1. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established by the Commission on Human Rights pursuant to its resolution 2004/13 and has since been renewed annually. Pursuant to that resolution and subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur has submitted two reports every year: one to the Human Rights Council and the other to the Assembly. When presenting his last report to the Assembly (A/67/370), the Special Rapporteur called on Member States and the international community to undertake a comprehensive review of the many reports on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over the years, to assess the underlying patterns and trends, and to consider setting up a more detailed mechanism of inquiry.

2. In his stock-taking report of 1 February 2013 (A/HRC/22/57), submitted to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-second session, held from 25 February to 22 March 2013, the Special Rapporteur provided a comprehensive review of no fewer than 60 United Nations documents, including numerous reports and resolutions, on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since 2004. The report identified nine underlying patterns of violations which pointed to the need for the establishment of an inquiry mechanism with adequate resources to investigate and more fully document the grave, systematic and widespread violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Special Rapporteur recommended that the inquiry should examine the issues of institutional and personal accountability for such violations, in particular where they may amount to crimes against humanity.

3. Subsequently, the Human Rights Council, in paragraph 5 of resolution 22/13 of 21 March 2013, which the Council adopted without a vote at its twenty-second session, decided to establish, for a period of one year, a commission of inquiry to investigate the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as outlined in paragraph 31 of the aforementioned 2013 stock-taking report of the Special Rapporteur (A/HRC/22/57). In the same resolution, the Council extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for one year and designated him to be one of the three members of the commission of inquiry. The present report provides an overview of the developments concerning human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since the Special Rapporteur last reported to the General Assembly.

II. Full-fledged international inquiry

4. There was a significant development in tackling the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during the current reporting period. Echoing the calls by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,[1] the Special Rapporteur and many human rights non-governmental organizations,[2] the

[1] See "Pillay urges more attention to human rights abuses in North Korea, calls for international inquiry", 14 January 2013. Available from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12923&LangID=E.

[2] See "The International Coalition to Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea urges Human Rights Council to create inquiry into mass atrocity crimes", 23 January 2013. Available from http://www.stopnkcrimes.org/bbs/board.php?bo_table=statements&wr_id=33.

international community decided to set up a full-fledged international inquiry to investigate the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Adoption by the Human Rights Council of resolution 22/13, by which the commission of inquiry was established, reinforces the unequivocal message sent by the General Assembly on 20 December 2012, when, for the first time, the Assembly adopted, without a vote, a resolution (Assembly resolution 67/181) on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Special Rapporteur stresses that it is critical to maintain the present level of support for the resolutions in the coming years, and for influential Member States to support the Special Rapporteur's engagement with the new leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

5. As noted above, acting on the key findings and recommendations contained in the stock-taking report of the Special Rapporteur, the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 22/13, mandated the commission of inquiry to investigate the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. With specific reference to paragraph 31 of the report, the Council, in paragraph 5 of the same resolution, decided that the scope of the investigations would include the violation of the right to food, the violations associated with prison camps, torture and inhuman treatment, arbitrary detention, discrimination, violations of freedom of expression, violations of the right to life, violations of freedom of movement, and enforced disappearances, including in the form of abductions of nationals of other States, with a view to ensuring full accountability, in particular where those violations might amount to crimes against humanity.

6. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the establishment of the commission of inquiry by the Human Rights Council and is honoured to serve as one of the three commissioners. The Special Rapporteur reiterates what he specified in paragraph 25 of his stock-taking report, namely, that many, if not all, of the nine patterns of violations identified in paragraph 6 of that report might amount to crimes against humanity, committed as part of systematic and/or widespread attacks against the civilian population. The Special Rapporteur notes that the prohibition against crimes against humanity is entrenched in international customary law and is considered to constitute a peremptory norm or *jus cogens*, meaning that the prohibition is accepted by the international community of States as a norm from which no derogation is ever permitted.

7. In paragraph 31 of his report, the Special Rapporteur recommended that the inquiry include:

(a) More detailed analysis of the grave, widespread and systematic violations of human rights through the collection and documentation of victims' testimonies and the accounts of survivors, witnesses and perpetrators;

(b) More detailed documentation of the most egregious violations of human rights, in particular closer examination of the widespread and systematic practice of torture and arbitrary detention, and the full range of violations committed in the prison camps, as well as the abduction of foreign nationals;

(c) Closer examination of the issue of discrimination in the systemic denial and violation of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, including access to food, restrictions on freedom of movement and on freedom of expression, arbitrary arrest and torture;

(d) A detailed examination and legal analysis of whether crimes against humanity are being perpetrated in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as violation of the human rights of foreign nationals such as abductees;

(e) A closer examination of the issue of accountability in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, given the problem of pervasive impunity and almost a decade of non-cooperation by the Government with the United Nations human rights mechanisms.

8. The commission of inquiry, which consists of Michael Donald Kirby (Chair), Sonja Biserko and the Special Rapporteur, began its operations in the first week of July 2013. More information about the work of the Special Rapporteur in the context of the commission of inquiry will be available in the oral update to be provided by the commission to the General Assembly in October 2013. The commission will submit its report, with findings and recommendations, to the Human Rights Council in March 2014.

9. The Special Rapporteur reiterates that increased scrutiny from the international inquiry affords a measure of protection, especially when coupled with the prospect of future criminal investigations and the deterrent effect that such a prospect may have on individual perpetrators. It remains, however, but a significant first step. In this context, it is crucial for the international community to demonstrate its determination to follow up on the findings and recommendations of the international inquiry and to keep urging the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur and the commission of inquiry.

III. Asylum seekers and the principle of non-refoulement

10. The refoulement of asylum seekers fleeing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains a pressing issue. On 30 May 2013, the Special Rapporteur issued a press release expressing "extreme concern" for the protection of nine defectors from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, mostly children and reportedly all orphans, who were reportedly repatriated from the Lao People's Democratic Republic and sent to China on 27 May.[3] He stressed that no one should be refouled to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where he or she might face persecution or severe punishment, including torture and the death penalty, and that all of the concerned authorities had an urgent responsibility to ensure the protection of the defectors.[4] The Special Rapporteur also appealed to the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to show transparency and grant independent access to the nine defectors, so that their status and well-being, could be determined.

11. In a communication dated 7 June to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva stated that the nine individuals had been sent back,

[3] "North Korea: UN Special Rapporteur concerned for the wellbeing of nine young defectors". Available from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13381&LangID=E.

[4] The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees also issued a press release on 30 May 2013 calling on all States to adhere to the principle of non-refoulement as a core tenet of customary international law. The press release, entitled "UNHCR chief calls on states to respect non-refoulement after North Koreans deported from Laos", is available from http://www.unhcr.org/print/51a7510b9.html.

consistent with the country's immigration law. The Government of China later stated that the nine individuals had entered China on 27 May and left for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 28 May with lawful and valid travelling documents and visas, and that China had not received any request from either the Lao People's Democratic Republic or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to facilitate their return.[5]

12. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in a communication dated 25 June 2013 to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated that the "teenagers" had returned and had taken part in a round-table talk broadcast by Korean Central TV on 21 June. The Government implied that there was no need to verify their safety and well-being and maintained that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would continue to protect its citizens from human trafficking and kidnapping.

13. The Special Rapporteur is of the view that the Government of the Democratic People's Republic has not provided satisfactory answers with regard to the case of the nine young defectors who were returned, and that he still has concerns about the penalties and treatment they could face after their return. He reiterates the appeal contained in his 30 May 2013 press release to the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to show transparency and to give the nine individuals access to an independent actor who could determine their status and well-being.

14. Another notable trend during the reporting period concerns tightened border control and harsher punishment against those fleeing the country. Reports suggest that following the death of the leader, Kim Jong-il, the new Government under Kim Jong-un has enacted a shoot-on-sight decree to crack down on unauthorized crossing of the northern border into China.[6] This, together with the increased number of incidents of refoulement, partly explains the significant decrease in the number of individuals from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who have reached the Republic of Korea since 2012. According to figures available on the website of the Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea, a total of 2,706 individuals arrived in the Republic of Korea in 2011; the number dropped to 1,509 in 2012. Moreover, in the first five months of 2013, the number of individuals from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who reached the Republic of Korea fell further, to 596. This represents a reversal of the trend of steady increase in the number of annual arrivals since 1998, when 947 individuals from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had managed to enter the Republic of Korea.[7]

15. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is a criminal offence for citizens to leave the country without State permission. Article 62 of the Criminal Code bans citizens from travelling to another country without State permission, which is in clear violation of the obligation of the Democratic People's Republic of

[5] In a communication dated 2 July 2013 from the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

[6] See, for example, Human Rights Watch World Report 2013: North Korea, available from http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/north-korea?page=3; and Amnesty International Annual Report North Korea 2013, available from http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/annual-report-north-korea-2013?page=show.

[7] The figures are available on the website of the Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea (http://eng.unikorea.go.kr/CmsWeb/viewPage.req?idx=PG0000000166) (in Korean only).

Korea under article 12 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[8] which stipulates, inter alia, that "(E)veryone shall be free to leave any country, including his own". There are numerous reports and testimonies of persons being sentenced to up to five years in a prison camp and, sometimes, to death for leaving the country without permission. Therefore, the customary principle of international law of non-refoulement, that is, the obligation not to return asylum seekers or refugees to a place where their life or liberty would be at risk, clearly applies to individuals from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who have left the country without permission. It applies to those who flee the country owing to persecution as well as to those who leave for economic or other reasons without permission. The Special Rapporteur reminds all States of their non-refoulement obligations under international law and reiterates his calls to the neighbouring countries of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abstain from forcibly returning persons seeking international protection.

IV. "Military first" versus the right to food

16. During the reporting period, in December 2012, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a long-range rocket.[9] On 12 February 2013, the country conducted its third nuclear test, which provoked significant international attention. In response, the Security Council, on 7 March 2013, unanimously adopted resolution 2094 (2013) to strengthen and expand the scope of United Nations sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by targeting the illicit activities of diplomatic personnel, the transfer of cash in bulk, and the country's banking relationships.[10] The aftermath of the nuclear test also led to increased tension in the region and beyond, as well as the suspension of operations in the Kaesong industrial complex, run jointly with the Republic of Korea, affecting some 53,000 employees of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea working in the complex.[11] The allocation of limited national resources by the State prioritizes militarization under the Songun "military first" policy. This has significant consequences for food security, as suggested in an early 2013 report that a famine had hit the grain-growing Hwanghae region in 2012 and may have killed thousands of people.[12]

17. "Democratic People's Republic of Korea: humanitarian overview", released by the United Nations in March 2013, stated that the majority of the people, about

[8] See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[9] On 22 January 2013, the Security Council adopted resolution 2087 (2013), in which it condemned the rocket launch.

[10] Summary by the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat of the 6932nd meeting (AM) of the Security Council, held on 7 March 2013 (see SC/10934).

[11] According to the Yonhap News Agency, the suspension is estimated to have cost the 123 companies of the Republic of Korea US$ 942 million in damages. No data are available on the loss of wages of the employees of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As of 24 July, the two sides had held several rounds of meetings about reopening the complex but they have yet to reach an agreement. See "Koreas to square off on safeguards for Kaesong park", Yonhap News Agency, 24 July 2013. Available from http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/07/24/68/0301000000AEN20130724003600315F.html.

[12] See "Famine hit N. Korea's rice basket in 2012, report says", Reuters, 7 February 2013, available, through ReliefWeb, from http://www.trust.org/item/?map=famine-hit-nkoreas-rice-basket-in-2012-report-says/; and Louisa Lim, "Hunger still haunts North Korea, citizens say", NPR News, 10 December 2012, available from http://m.npr.org/story/166760055.

16 million, remain chronically food-insecure and highly vulnerable to production shocks. About 2.8 million people in the most food-insecure provinces need assistance in obtaining regular nutritious food. The National Nutrition Survey 2012 stated that malnutrition rates continued to be of great concern, with a chronic malnutrition rate among children under age 5 at 27.9 per cent and with 4 per cent acutely malnourished. In his report to the Human Rights Council of 13 February 2012, the Special Rapporteur raised his concern in this regard and called on the Government to allocate more resources to agriculture than to its military sector (A/HRC/19/65, para. 26).

18. Evidence suggests that the Government has continued its policy of pursuing militarization at the expense of the majority of people's right to food. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that the primary obligation to feed people lies with the State, which must take all measures necessary to rectify existing flaws in the production and distribution system which have contributed for the shortage of food. He also underscores the importance of meeting the food shortfall by ensuring that an adequate quantity of food of good quality is available through additional imports by the Government, supported by the international agencies and bilateral donors. In this context, the Special Rapporteur wishes to highlight that members of the international community have both a joint and an individual responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance in times of emergency. States should refrain at all times from instituting food embargoes or similar measures that endanger the conditions needed for food production and access to food in other countries. Food should never be used as an instrument of political and economic pressure.

19. The Special Rapporteur recalls that the violation of the right to food in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has already been extensively documented by the United Nations. The question of access to food, food distribution and humanitarian food assistance is dealt with in all resolutions of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly and all reports of the Special Rapporteur and the Secretary-General. Their findings and recommendations are documented in the Special Rapporteur's stock-taking report (see A/HRC/22/57, annex I, sect. A, paras. 1-20). The violation of the right to food is also one of the nine areas of violations being investigated by the commission of inquiry.

V. Arbitrary detention, prison camps and enforced disappearances

20. Observers and civil society reports suggest that the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has deteriorated under the leadership of Kim Jong-un. In particular, there are signs of heightened social control and of increased use of public security forces as a means to stabilize the new regime.[13] This in turn exacerbates the abuse of power by local officials and law enforcement agents. Human rights groups have documented the widespread use of arbitrary arrests and detention by corrupt officials to extort bribes in the recent crackdown on economic "crimes",[14] such as engaging in private trading activities and possessing

[13] See Soo-Am Kim, "Policy environment and directions for North Korean human rights", *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, vol. 21, No. 2 (2012), pp. 33-60, at p. 41.

[14] See "North Korea: stop crackdown on economic 'crimes': new testimony details harsh punishments for cell phones, outside contact, market activity", Human Rights Watch, 15 May

DVDs and CDs of dramatic and music productions from abroad. As the Government tightens its control over people's daily lives, more individuals in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are forced to pay bribes in order to avoid punishment.

21. On 3 April 2012, the International Coalition to Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK),[15] a coalition of some 40 international non-governmental organizations, submitted a petition for relief[16] to the special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council on the use of labour camps for political prisoners and the pattern of human rights violation committed in these prison camps. These were detailed extensively in the petition, entitled "The situation of detainees in gulag system (*Kwan-li-so*) of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea".[16] According to the information received, labour camps for political prisoners have been in operation since the 1950s in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is reported that individuals who have committed or are perceived to have committed a political crime are involuntarily or forcibly taken to an interrogation facility, detained and typically subjected to torture until a confession is obtained. After being declared guilty by the State Security Protection Agency, the detainee is either executed immediately or transferred to a prison camp. Throughout their detention, prisoners are reportedly not given a trial and are held incommunicado without any information concerning the charges against them or the length or place of detention. According to reports, detainees have been held in harsh conditions. It has been alleged that prisoners, including children, have been subjected to forced labour, and that torture and public executions are common within the camps. Reports also suggest that women have been subjected to sexual exploitation, rape, forced abortion and killing. In at least four camps, the majority of prisoners reportedly remain in custody until their death. Over the past few decades, it is estimated that at least 400,000 prisoners have perished in the camps.[17]

22. Based on that petition, on 3 October 2012, five mandate holders — namely, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances — sent a joint allegation letter to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the alleged use of labour camps for political prisoners. After having received no response from the Government, the mandate holders issued a press release in February 2013 calling for an international inquiry into the human rights abuses in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which would shed light on the country's extensive political prison camp system.[18]

23. The prison camp system is believed to comprise at least six camps, each one covering 400 square miles or more: (a) Kaechon, South Pyongan Province (camp 14); (b) Yodok, South Hamgyong Province (camp 15); (c) Hwasong, North Hamgyong

2013. Available from http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/05/15/north-korea-stop-crackdown-economic-crimes.

[15] See http://www.stopnkcrimes.org/about_01.php.

[16] Available from http://www.fidh.org/The-International-Coalition-to.

[17] See document A/HRC/22/67 and Corr.1 and 2, sect. II.B, p. 114, case No. PRK 1/2012.

[18] "UN experts call for an international inquiry into North Korea human rights abuses", 28 February 2013. Available from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13058&LangID=E.

Province (camp 16); (d) Bukchang, South Pyongan Province (camp 18); (e) Hoeryong, North Hamgyong Province (camp 22); and (f) Congjin, North Hamgyong Province (camp 25). It is estimated that these camps currently hold between 150,000 and 200,000 prisoners.[19] Prisoners are reportedly given no access to health care and very limited food rations, resulting in near starvation. They are allegedly commonly forced to work seven days a week in mining, logging, farming or manufacturing — with rest only one day per month and on the three national holidays — and sometimes in dangerous conditions, causing some prisoners to lose toes, fingers or limbs or to develop physical deformities.

24. One particularly worrying practice, widely documented by the United Nations, is detention due to guilt by association: when a person is punished for a political or ideological crime, members of his or her family are also punished. Up to three generations of family members of detainees are sent on this basis to the camps in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Detainees are often not told the reasons for their detention or whether they will ever be released. No information regarding their whereabouts is provided to friends, neighbours, co-workers or more distant relatives who enquire about them.

25. In its report to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-second session, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances expressed serious concern regarding the allegations concerning the alleged use of labour camps for political prisoners.[20] The Working Group noted that, since its establishment, it had transmitted 20 cases to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: all remain outstanding.[21]

26. At its sixty-fifth session held in November 2012, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention adopted an opinion (No. 47/2012) concluding that Kang Mi-ho, Kim Jeong-nam and Shin Kyung-seop were arbitrarily detained, in violation of articles 9 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[22] and articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[23] The two cases are consistent with the continuing pattern of systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights, involving the use of political prison camps, as documented in numerous United Nations reports.[24]

27. The first case concerns Kang Mi-ho and her 11-year-old son Kim Jeong-nam, who were allegedly arrested by the National Security Agency in May 2011 and taken to No. 15 Kwanliso at Yodok, also known as camp 15, in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Their detention was allegedly linked to the activities of Kang's brother, who defected and is a famous dissident working as a reporter for *Chosun Ilbo*, a large newspaper in the Republic of Korea. The source of the complaint[25] submitted that the reason for the detention of Kang and her son was

[19] A/HRC/22/57, annex I, para. 53.

[20] A/HRC/22/45, para. 113.

[21] A/HRC/22/45 and Corr.1, para. 112. One additional case was transmitted to the Government during the ninety-ninth session of the Working Group in March 2013; further information is available in a post-sessional document of the Working Group dated 10 June 2013 (A/HRC/WGEID/99/1), sect. III.

[22] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[23] See A/HRC/WGAD/2012/47 dated 13 December 2012 (advance unedited version), para. 23.

[24] Documents A/HRC/22/57, A/HRC/16/58, A/66/322 and A/67/370, for example.

[25] The source of the information cannot be disclosed owing to the methods of work of the Working Group.

linked to the activities of her brother, who allegedly had sent her money through a "Korean-Chinese broker" between early 2008 and mid-2011. According to the source, the broker contacted the brother in July 2011 and explained that he had temporarily been imprisoned by the National Security Agency and that he could not find Ms. Kang.

28. The second case concerns Shin Kyung-seop, who was allegedly arrested in 1965 and taken to camp 14 together with his parents and two brothers. It is alleged that, owing to his brother's defection during the Korean War, Shin's entire family has spent 40 years in camp 14. Remaining under the strict surveillance of the camp's guards, Mr. Shin was allowed to marry; he and his wife had two children. In April 1996, Mr. Shin's wife and their older son were caught while trying to escape the camp. The source of the complaint contended that, as a result, Shin and his younger son were taken to an underground prison, where they were allegedly tortured. Shin's leg bones were broken and his right leg faced outward in an unnatural way. It was reported that Mr. Shin's health condition was critical. In both cases, the Working Group found that the detainees were detained arbitrarily and it requested their immediate release. It reminded the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its duties to comply with international human rights obligations not to detain arbitrarily, to release persons who were arbitrarily detained, and to provide compensation to them.

29. The Working Group also recalled that, under certain circumstances, widespread or systematic imprisonment or other severe deprivation of liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law might constitute crimes against humanity. It noted that the duty of complying with international human rights obligations that were peremptory and *erga omnes* norms, such as the prohibition of arbitrary detention, rested not only on the Government but on all officials, including judges, police and security officers, and prison officers with relevant responsibilities (A/HRC/WGAD/2012/47, para. 22).

30. The Special Rapporteur recalls that he raised the case of Shin Sook Ja, Oh Hae Won and Oh Kyu Won in his 13 September 2012 report to the General Assembly (see A/67/370, sect. IV.C, paras. 31-38), citing it as an example of a practice of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea whereby citizens are held in prison camps on the basis of guilt by association. The latest cases addressed by the Working Group and the Government's statement that it "categorically rejects the cases ... as one of the anti-DPRK attempts" (A/HRC/WGAD/2012/47, para. 10) underline the consistent pattern of gross human rights violations, which has continued with impunity. The Special Rapporteur reiterates that grave human rights violations in the prison camps — (or) even the mere existence of such camps — under slave-like conditions for political prisoners, may qualify as crimes against humanity (A/HRC/22/57, para. 28).

VI. Discrimination

31. Discrimination has a cross-cutting impact on all of the human rights issues addressed in the present report, often leading to disproportionate or specific effects of human rights violations and a multiplicity of cases of discrimination against women, children, people living with disabilities and returnees. The United Nations reports and resolutions have documented several patterns of discrimination in the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea in particular (see A/HRC/22/57, annex I, para. 59):

(a) Division of society into three different groups of allegiance to the regime: those close to the regime (the core mass), the group in the middle (the basic mass) and those considered hostile to the regime (the complex mass) (see A/60/306, A/61/349 and A/64/224; and A/HRC/7/20 and A/HRC/10/18), which affects the citizen's level of enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including access to food;

(b) Discrimination against women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, including the disproportionate effect of malnutrition on these populations and specific violations suffered by individuals in each of these categories;

(c) Violations specifically affecting those who have been repatriated to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and their families.

32. A report released in June 2013, based on a series of interviews with 60 female defectors who had left the Democratic People's Republic of Korea between 2010 and 2012, documented the treatment of women in detention, and the practice of forced abortion and infanticide.[26] Citing a former official of the People's Safety Agency in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it also contained disturbing allegations that "there is an island with 'Hospital 83' (under administration of South Hamgyong Province) to which disabled persons are being sent for medical tests such as dissection of body parts, as well as tests of biological and chemical weapons".[27]

33. The report further stated that:

> (t)he island where disabled people are sent is reportedly completely secluded. Apart from the island, our interviewee reported of a long-term reform through labour detention (correction centre), Gyohwaso No. 1 in Kaechon where disabled are often sent to. Another person with a police background in North Korea reported that a similar institution practicing chemical and biological tests on disabled and criminals is in a secluded mountainous area of North Hamgyong Province, from where two healthy people (criminals) allegedly escaped, spreading information about the tests.[28]

34. The Special Rapporteur strongly condemns any inhumane practice targeting persons with disabilities. He underlines that inhumane acts intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health, committed as part of systematic and/or widespread attacks against the civilian population, may amount to international crimes. He fully supports the call by civil society for the commission of inquiry to investigate and document information on the existence of special detention facilities for persons with disabilities and the allegations that they are being used for chemical and biological tests.

---

[26] Joanna Hosaniak (Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights), *Status of Human Rights in the Context of Socio-Economic Changes in the DPRK* (Seoul, Life and Human Rights Books, 2013), launched on 28 June 2013.

[27] Ibid., p. 42.

[28] Ibid.

VII. Recommendations

35. The Special Rapporteur calls on the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cooperate fully with the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the commission of inquiry and emphasizes the State's obligations to ensure the overall protection and promotion of human rights in the country, as provided under international human rights instruments. He calls on the Government to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

36. The Special Rapporteur calls on the international community to maintain its unanimous support for protecting the human rights of all in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to continue to demonstrate its determination to address the issue of accountability for the grave, systematic and widespread human rights violations, given the problem of pervasive impunity and almost a decade of non-cooperation by the Government with most United Nations human rights mechanisms.

37. The Special Rapporteur calls on all countries where people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are seeking refuge or through which they are transiting, to protect such people, to treat them humanely and to adhere to the principle of non-refoulement by abstaining from returning them to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. He calls on the Government to share information on the status and treatment of persons who were returned to the country, including the nine youths from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who were returned in May 2013.

38. The Special Rapporteur reiterates his call to the Government to address the critical food situation in the country and to rethink its approach to the "military first" policy in order to reallocate enough resources to improve the living standard of the people in the country. He also stresses the need for the international community to provide continued humanitarian support to the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

39. The Special Rapporteur calls on the Government to release immediately all persons who have been held in prison camps on the basis of guilt by association, including Kang Mi-ho, Kim Jeong-nam and Shin Kyung-seop. The Special Rapporteur renews his call to the Government to release Shin Sook Ja and her two daughters.

40. The Special Rapporteur urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to halt all practices of discrimination against women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and those belonging to the group considered hostile to the regime. The Special Rapporteur urges the Government to immediately clarify its treatment of persons with disabilities, in particular concerning the allegations that they were used for testing biological and chemical weapons.

United Nations A/68/320

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 August 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 19 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of progress made on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, in response to General Assembly resolution 67/209. Economic losses amount to hundreds of billions of dollars annually and are projected to double by 2030. Driven by investment decisions that do not take disaster risks into account, disaster losses are out of control, threatening the lives and livelihoods of billions of people and making sustainable growth and development an uncertain aspiration in many countries, now and in the future.

The fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in May 2013, brought together the largest and most diverse range of stakeholders to date, signalling the growing interest in and action on disaster risk reduction. The Platform provided substantive inputs into the development of a successor framework to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and called for governments to take a strong lead to ensure that disaster risk reduction is overtly recognized in the post-2015 development agenda.

Subject to a formal decision of the General Assembly, the Government of Japan has proposed that the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction be held from 14 to 18 March 2015 in Sendai city, Miyagi prefecture, Japan. Preparations are under way, including consultations on the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction to replace the Hyogo Framework for Action. Several core elements have emerged from the consultations, including: building on the existing framework and promotion of guiding principles; a bottom-up, people-centred framework with a focus on local action; governance, accountability

* A/68/150.

Please recycle

and financing; and a mutually reinforcing framework with the post-2015 development agenda. Inclusive preparation for and participation in the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will be key to ensuring that its outcome is owned and acted on by all stakeholders.

I. Trends in disasters and disaster risks

1. The cumulative impact of disasters represents significant lost opportunities for human development. Since 1992, when the international community first met to discuss sustainable development at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, more than 4.4 billion people have been affected in internationally reported disasters, a total of $2 trillion in damages, or an estimated 25 years of total overseas development aid, has been incurred, and over 1.3 million lives have been lost.

2. For the first time globally, annual economic losses from disasters exceeded $100 billion for three consecutive years and reached an estimated $157 billion for the reporting period. Risk of economic loss is growing as exposure of economic assets increases, outstripping reductions in vulnerability.[1] Damages associated with Hurricane Sandy in the United States of America, Canada and across the Caribbean exceeded $65 billion. Extensive flooding in parts of south-west and north-east China resulted in overall losses in excess of $8 billion. The lives lost as a result of Hurricane Sandy and the flooding in China were 210 and 151, respectively.[2]

3. The impacts on people's lives and health are considerable. Throughout the reporting period, over 15,302 people died, and 102 million were affected by some 302 internationally reported disasters.[3] The deadliest single disaster was Typhoon Bopha, which hit Mindanao in the Philippines in December 2012, leaving 1,900 people dead or missing and affecting 6.2 million people. Among the many countries that suffered from floods was Pakistan, where approximately 5 million people were affected. More than 18 million people suffered the effects of drought in the Sahel in 2012, including an estimated 7.7 million persons in Nigeria.

4. While large disasters receive the greatest visibility, it is extensive risk, characterized by low-severity, high-frequency disasters, that continues to represent one of the greatest challenges for development, particularly for low- and middle-income countries.[4] Economies with limited economic bases of investment and high average annual losses from disasters — such as small island developing States and the least developed countries — are less likely to be able to absorb recurrent disaster losses. In Jamaica, for example, average losses between 1991 and 2011 were equivalent to 2.6 per cent of the country's average annual investments. In Mozambique, disaster-related economic losses exceed 1 per cent of gross domestic product annually, with losses reaching 20 per cent following large-scale disasters, as seen in the floods of 200[illegible] and 2013. This loss in economic growth combined with disaster-related recovery spending continues to have a real and generational impact on development.

5. The impact of disasters on natural ecosystems is another area that receives too little attention. Wildland fires across Australia, Canada, the Russian Federation, the United States and parts of Africa and Asia contributed to the loss and erosion of natural ecosystems and resulted in serious consequences for communities,

---

[1] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), *2013 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: from Shared Risk to Shared Value: The Business Case Disaster Risk Reduction* (Geneva, Switzerland, 2013).

[2] Munchener Ruckversicherungs-Gesellschaft, Geo Risks Research, NatCatSERVICE, March 2013.

[3] EM-DAT: the OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database.

[4] UNISDR, *2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Risk and Poverty in a Changing Climate* (Geneva, Switzerland, 2009).

businesses and the environment. The average internationally reported losses generated by wildland fires annually between 2002 and 2011 were estimated at a relatively low $2.4 billion.[3] However, that figure does not include the impact on ecosystem services, including carbon storage, support to biodiversity, protection of water sources, soil erosion and land degradation, and climate regulation.

6. Between 70 to 85 per cent of all new investment is generated from the private sector. Institutional investors currently manage assets worth more than $80 trillion globally, much of it with limited consideration to disaster risk.[1] In the years ahead, trillions of dollars will be invested in hazard-exposed regions. If those investments fail to take into account natural hazards and vulnerabilities — as they largely do now — risk will continue to accelerate.

7. Evidence-based decision-making remains critical to investment decisions that reduce risks. The number of national disaster databases is growing, and they now provide a more accurate picture of disaster losses and risks. Current evidence from databases suggests that total direct losses in 40 low- and middle-income countries was an estimated $305 billion between 1981 and 2011. Evidence from the *2013 Global Assessment Report* suggests that reporting of disaster losses has been conservative, with figures likely to be 50 per cent higher when smaller disasters are included. The increase in disaster losses warrants urgent action to address the underlying drivers of risk, and reliable and available data is needed.

II. Coordination and guidance on disaster risk reduction

A. Strengthening coordination at the global level

8. During the period under review, the secretariat of the International Strategy coordinated several initiatives, including consultations on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction; convened the fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction; coordinated the work of the United Nations system on the adoption of a United Nations Plan of Action; and developed several other areas of guidance.

Consultations on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction

9. My Special Representative for the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva officially launched the consultations in March 2012. The first phase involved 86 events, the results of which have been compiled in a Synthesis Report (available from http://www.unisdr.org/files/32535_hfasynthesisreportfinal.pdf) to inform the fourth session of the Global Platform.

Fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

10. The fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Geneva from 21 to 23 May 2013, was chaired by the Government of Switzerland and brought together well over 3,000 participants. The fourth session was the largest and most diverse platform to date, with representation from 172 countries from: national and local governments; intergovernmental organizations; the International

Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; non-governmental organizations; mayors and parliamentarians; representatives of local communities, indigenous peoples, children and youth, and persons with disabilities; and business, academia and the sciences.

11. The Global Platform built on the foundations laid by the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction that were convened in Africa, the Americas, the Asia-Pacific region, the Arab States and Europe as well as many consultative and preparatory meetings on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. Indeed, the fourth session of the Global Platform was a key milestone in the ongoing consultations on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

12. Over 200 events and meetings were held, including: substantive dialogue with participants and stakeholders, and a high-level ministerial level dialogue; three main plenary sessions led by stakeholders and representatives of the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities, and government; a high-level event on disaster risk reduction for small island developing States in the context of preparations for the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States; and featured events on disaster risk reduction business cases that applied science and technology, financing, health, women, children and youth, standard setting, urban planning, cultural heritage, drought and reconstruction.

13. The high-level dialogue at the Global Platform on the theme "Ahead of the wave: leading the way to resilience", co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and Ms. Tarja Halonen, former President of Finland, brought together 45 high-level representatives, including 34 ministers, chief executive officers and experts. The dialogue, through the agreed communiqué (available from http://www.preventionweb.net/files/33281_highlevelcommunique.pdf) called for: urgent action to address disaster risk in the post-2015 development agenda and the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change; the development of nationally agreed standards for hazard risk assessments; the start of a global safe schools and safe health structures campaign; the private sector to integrate disaster risk considerations into risk management practices; and, finally, the stimulation of collaboration on risk management among the public and private sectors at the local and national levels.

14. One focus of the Global Platform was on the economics of disaster risk reduction, presenting the business case and engaging with the private sector as both actor and partner. Over 150 business delegates attended. Chief executive officers and private sector delegates came together for their first annual general meeting on the theme "Private sector for disaster risk reduction" for the purpose of sharing business cases and practices as well as contributing to the global consultation on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

15. The Chair's summary (available from http://www.preventionweb.net/files/33306_finalchairssummaryoffourthsessionof.pdf) presents policy issues and guidance emanating from the sessions, events and meetings. It also highlighted the need to target the root causes of risk; connect mutually reinforcing agendas; assess risk; provide leadership at the local level; engage communities to achieve results; recognize the private sector as actor and required partner; strengthen integrated risk governance; and strengthen scientific and technical support for evidence-based decision-making.

16. The Strategy secretariat will work with partners and stakeholders to ensure the necessary follow-up to the Chair's summary as well as the high-level dialogue communiqué, including the development of possible targets and indicators for a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and the global safe schools and safe health structures campaign in disaster-prone areas.

Coordinating the United Nations system

17. In my previous report to the General Assembly (A/67/335), I outlined the importance of disaster risk reduction in the United Nations system and called for coherent and coordinated engagement in supporting Member States to accelerate progress in disaster risk reduction. Led by the Strategy secretariat, and with the involvement of 29 United Nations system organizations, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, a United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience (available from http://www.preventionweb.net/files/33703_actionplanweb14.06cs[1].pdf) was endorsed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) at its spring session, held on 6 April 2013 in Madrid.

18. The United Nations Plan of Action, in line with the vision of the Hyogo Framework for Action to substantially reduce disaster losses in all countries, sets out three commitments to support accelerated risk reduction and efforts to build resilience. Progress on implementation of the Plan of Action will be reviewed by a senior leadership group with the support of the Senior Management Group on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience of the High-level Committee on Programmes. The Plan of Action will be instrumental in implementing the guidance of the General Assembly on its quadrennial policy review of United Nations operational activities for development. The Plan of Action will be updated by the High-level Committee on Programmes after 2015 in the light of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

19. Other coordinated efforts of the United Nations system on disaster risk reduction include the Global Framework for Climate Services (available from http://www.gfcs-climate.org), which is being implemented by Governments with the support of the United Nations system and its partners to provide accurate and accessible climate services to users all over the world, with initial priority being given to issues related to food security, water management, disaster risk reduction and health.

International Day for Disaster Reduction

20. On the International Day for Disaster Reduction, which was observed on 13 October in 2012, the United Nations system highlighted the role of women and girls, the invisible force of resilience, and recognized and encouraged the leadership roles women have assumed in disaster risk reduction, as well as the movement beyond the tendency to view and portray women and girls only as victims.

21. The theme of the International Day for Disaster Reduction in 2013 will be on persons with disabilities (see concept paper entitled "A not so obvious conversation", available from http://www.unisdr.org/2013/iddr/documents/concept-2page.pdf). The intention is to switch on and amplify the theme in order to address the critical issue of the needs of persons with disabilities in potential disaster scenarios. The events surrounding the International Day will also provide an opportunity for persons with

disabilities to contribute to consultations on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Guiding and coordinating efforts with global partners

22. The *2013 Global Assessment Report* provides evidence of the need to increase engagement with the business community. Investors manage assets worth more than $80 trillion globally, yet asset managers rarely take disaster risk reduction into consideration when making investments. Where private investors choose to place funds in the future will largely determine how much disaster risk will build up and how underlying risk drivers will be addressed. There is increasing understanding of the relationship between investment decisions and disaster risk reduction. Companies are leading efforts to build awareness of and commitment to disaster risk reduction within the private sector through sector-generated research and outreach. A number of United Nations-supported initiatives, including the Strategy secretariat's publication entitled "Five essentials for business in disaster risk reduction" (available from http://www.preventionweb.net/files/33428_334285essentialscasestudies.pdf), are providing entry points for greater engagement with the private sector.

B. Strengthening coordination at the regional level

23. The Strategy secretariat continued to provide support to the development and implementation of regional strategies and action plans for disaster risk reduction across the world. Regional coordination, primarily through regional platforms, provided important opportunities for multi-stakeholders for countries and stakeholder groups to determine regional priorities and essential questions for considerations in the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Africa

24. Africa is undergoing a period of rapid transformation in its economy, social structures and environment. Change, especially transformative change, brings both growth and vulnerability. Building communities that are resilient to disasters is the challenge facing Africa today. Leading the regional agenda for disaster risk reduction, the African Union Commission continues to demonstrate strong political commitment to implementing the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2006-2015) and Programme of Action for its implementation. At the subregional level, five regional economic communities have defined policies and programmes on disaster risk reduction. Regional economic communities are working to ensure that disaster risk is on the agenda of every government in Africa, with 38 countries in Africa having established national platforms or coordination mechanisms. Disaster risk governance and normative development have witnessed significant progress this year with special focus on the current East African Legislative Assembly's bill on disaster risk reduction and management.

25. With commitments from national governments on the increase, several efforts have been made to capture disaster loss data to make investment in disaster risk reduction more objective through credible evidence. Six countries have developed disaster loss databases, while two additional databases are set to be launched in the coming months.

26. The fourth Africa regional platform for disaster risk reduction, held in Arusha, the United Republic of Tanzania, from 13 to 15 February 2013, included the participation of more than 250 delegates from over 45 countries. In addition to governments and civil society, women, youth, local communities and the private sector were well represented. The regional platform reviewed achievements and challenges in implementing the Africa Regional Strategy and Programme of Action and identified measures for fulfilling shared commitments by 2015. Recommendations focused on strengthening capacity at the regional and subregional levels, increased political commitment and investments, better risk identification and early warning systems, promoting urban risk management and climate adaptation risk measures. At the institutional level, the focus this year has been on integrating climate change concerns into disaster risk reduction resulting in useful climate risk reporting.

27. It is planned to hold the fifth Africa regional platform in the second quarter of 2014.

Arab States

28. With the powerful political transformation occurring in many parts of the Arab region, the Arab States are committed to accelerating disaster risk reduction. The number of States in the region that have undertaken national assessments of progress and gaps in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action has increased. Countries are reporting more regularly on the Hyogo Framework for Action and are scrutinizing the challenges they face in integrating disaster risk reduction into national policies and programmes.

29. One area that remains a challenge is how to ensure that disaster risk reduction is linked into everyday planning decisions. For the most part, Arab States still struggle with mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development planning. There is a lack of clear national policy frameworks and legislation, which undermines coordination and hinders efforts to strengthen accountability in disaster risk reduction.

30. Despite those challenges, it is nonetheless evident that commitment to disaster risk reduction at the regional, national and local levels is increasing and strengthening. The first Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Aqaba, Jordan, from 19 to 21 March 2013, was attended by more than 250 representatives from the Arab region. Participants of the Conference adopted the Aqaba Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Cities and developed a common position on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The Aqaba Declaration, developed in collaboration with local governments, sets out a number of practical actions and targets to be achieved by 2017 to ensure that cities are more resilient to disasters. To ensure consistency with a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, the Declaration will be subject to a review process in 2015.

31. The next Arab regional platform for disaster risk reduction will be held in the second quarter of 2014.

Asia and the Pacific

32. Asia and the Pacific face the challenge of managing both the growing rate of exposure and rising vulnerability. Exposure to hazards has multiplied as urban

centres grow and people and economic activities expand into increasingly exposed and hazard-prone areas. In addition, smaller economies, those that have less diversified economic structures, and countries with high fiscal deficits, have greater vulnerability even when faced with relatively small-scale disasters. The growing economic losses owing to disasters in Asia and the Pacific have had an impact on development efforts, particularly for small farmers, microenterprises and poor households that bear the brunt of the costs of disasters.

33. In addressing those challenges, countries in Asia and the Pacific have placed strong emphasis on accelerating disaster risk reduction implementation using existing resources, while striving to close gaps in policies and legislation, capacities, information and financing. A strategic development in the region is the number of multi-stakeholder forums and civil society networks, which are expanding in scope with greater engagement. Regional coordination has been instrumental in raising the level of political commitments and in promoting action to address the disaster risk reduction challenges.

34. The fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 22 to 25 October 2012, was attended by over 2,500 participants from 72 States and resulted in the adoption of the Yogyakarta declaration on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific. For the first time, stakeholder commitments in the form of annexes to the declaration were included. The Pacific platform for disaster risk management, held in New Caledonia from 17 to 21 September 2012, committed to developing an integrated regional strategy for disaster risk management and climate change, to commence in 2016.

35. Thailand will host the sixth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangkok from 23 to 26 June 2014.

Europe

36. European countries are focusing on the establishment of legal and regulatory frameworks for disaster risk reduction. A number of countries have enacted new legislation to address disaster risk reduction, while others have amended existing legislation to reflect the changing risk landscape. Cooperation on addressing transboundary risk continues to advance, motivated by European Union legislation, through regional initiatives. The European Commission adopted the European Union strategy on adaptation to climate change to contribute to a more climate-resilient Europe through enhancing preparedness and capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change at the local, regional, national and European Union levels.

37. The European Commission adopted a Green Paper on insurance in the context of natural and man-made disasters. The Committee of the Regions, the voice of regions and cities in the European Union, adopted a resolution on future global approach to sustainable development indicating specifically disaster risk reduction as a key area to be addressed at the local level to achieve sustainable development. The resolution on the future global approach to ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future contains language on natural and man-made disasters, prevention activities and resilient cities. The Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities adopted resolution 339, which affirms its commitment to disaster risk reduction at the local level in line with the objectives of the making cities resilient campaign to raise the awareness of citizens and governments, use

local government budgets, and include disaster risk reduction in development and planning processes.

38. The third meeting of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from 1 to 3 October 2012. The regional meeting brought together experts from 27 European States, the European Commission and Council of Europe, the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe and the Strategy secretariat. The regional forum analysed the impact on European States of including risk reduction in climate change adaptation strategies and issued recommendations towards a systematic integration of a disaster risk reduction approach into such strategies. The forum facilitated exchanges among European countries in addressing resilience at the local level, resulting in strengthening the capacity of cities in risk assessment, climate change adaptation measures and early warning.

39. A regional consultation for Central Asia and the South Caucasus on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in March 2013. Some 60 representatives attended, assessing progress in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and identifying regional priorities, including risk assessments, resources, education campaigns, data collection and scientific evidence.

40. The next European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction will take place in Oslo from 23 to 25 September 2013.

The Americas

41. Urbanization across the Americas continues to pose many challenges in terms of the high concentration of public and private investments and assets in areas exposed to natural hazards, accelerated environmental degradation and weak governance. The combination of those factors, with the prevailing conditions of poverty and inequality in many parts of the Americas, has exacerbated the exposure and conditions of vulnerability to disasters of large parts of the population. In addressing the challenges, many countries in the Americas have committed to strengthening disaster risk reduction governance frameworks and developing new plans and strategies to further disaster risk reduction as a national priority.

42. Regional and subregional mechanisms are playing a critical role in advancing disaster risk reduction within development endeavours. The Organization of American States adopted the Inter-American Plan for Disaster Prevention and Response. In Central America, a consultative forum on the comprehensive management of disaster risk was established, and a corresponding fund was created. In the Caribbean, the Disaster Emergency Management Agency started a process to formulate a new comprehensive disaster management strategy, building on the existing one. In addition, the Association of Caribbean States incorporated disaster risk reduction as a key element of sustainable development into its new Plan of Action for 2013-2014, which was adopted in Petionville, Haiti.

43. The regional platform for disaster risk reduction in the Americas, which met in Santiago in November 2012, illustrated the commitment to working together to address disaster risk. The outcome of the regional platform, the Santiago communiqué, reaffirmed a path to economic development, social and environmental sustainability through bold and innovative approaches that allow for the

consolidation of achievements in the reduction of the underlying factors of risk. This included efforts to eradicate poverty and inequality and to promote access among nations and communities to information, knowledge, resources and opportunities. The regional platform also provided inputs into the consultations on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The Americas recognizes the need to achieve a higher level of political commitment towards the establishment of clear targets for disaster risk reduction that can be quantified and verified, as well as the mechanisms that enable the monitoring of follow-up actions.

44. The fourth session of the regional platform for disaster risk reduction in the Americas will be held in Ecuador from 27 to 29 May 2014.

C. Strengthening national level coordination

Progress on implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action

45. A review of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (available from http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/32916) found that since 2005: 191 countries have established focal points; 146 countries have participated in at least one cycle of the Hyogo Framework for Action review; 121 countries have enacted legislation to establish policy and legal frameworks; and 86 countries have set up formal national coordinating bodies for disaster risk reduction (national platforms).

46. There has been an increasing shift since 2005 from a crisis management approach to one of proactive risk reduction and building resilience in many countries. Governments are increasingly taking a multi-hazard approach to disaster risk reduction, translating and linking knowledge of the full range of hazards to all aspects of risk management. Decentralizing disaster risk reduction, giving more authority and responsibility to local communities, has improved although it has yet to make a significant impact on disaster reduction at the local level. Reducing the underlying risk factors of disasters remains the most challenging area. No country, since the beginning of the Hyogo Framework for Action monitor cycles in 2007, has reported comprehensive achievement across all indicators.

47. Progress is being constrained by the limited availability of human, technical and financial resources in countries at all income levels, which is hindering aspects of implementation ranging from early warning systems to education. Nearly all countries have reported difficulty in integrating climate change adaptation measures into national polices and in incorporating disaster risk reduction into environmental issues.

National platforms for disaster risk reduction

48. The 86 national platforms that have been established are now recognized as mechanisms that support the institutionalization of disaster risk reduction at the national level. National platforms provide space for stakeholders to advance disaster risk reduction. The role of the platforms was recognized at the fourth session of the global platform, where a call was made to hold a national platforms forum at the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015.

49. At the same time, there are gaps in purpose, guidance, support and capacity of the national platforms. Throughout 2012/2013, the Strategy secretariat facilitated a review of the capacity of national platforms in disaster risk reduction, led by

Ecuador, Germany, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines, Senegal and Sweden and supported by a reference group of 20 other national platforms. The review highlights the relevance of the platforms in leading the coordination of national disaster risk reduction activities. They include reporting, consulting and determining joint cross-sector initiatives. The importance of a multi-stakeholder membership of national platforms has been underlined.

50. A further way to strengthen the platforms and national coordination for disaster risk reduction is through peer reviews. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland became the first country to undergo a voluntary peer review to assess its progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. The review, conducted by a team comprised of members from Finland, Italy, Sweden, the European Commission, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Strategy secretariat, was found to be very useful. I encourage other countries to use a peer review to assess their national progress.

Integrating disaster risk reduction into United Nations country programmes

51. Efforts continued to strengthen United Nations support to countries in integrating disaster risk reduction into their development agendas through the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the leadership of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. In 2012, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cameroon, India, Jordan, the Republic of Moldova, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Sudan and Togo approved new Development Assistance Frameworks that incorporate disaster risk reduction considerations into development planning. The number of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks referencing disaster risk reduction in the Americas has increased from 3 to 10: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru. Since the formal approval by the United Nations of the operational guidelines for integrating disaster risk management into United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks in 2009, 54 countries have drawn up such plans. Over half the plans have incorporated disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Further progress is expected in the light of the recently endorsed United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience.

52. United Nations country teams have developed strategic action plans, reviewed country progress in recovery planning and refined strategic frameworks in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines and Viet Nam, along with a new regional United Nations Development Assistance Framework in the Pacific, which feature key disaster risk reduction elements. Stronger cooperation by the United Nations system had proved valuable in Djibouti, Lebanon and Mauritania in strengthening implementation of disaster risk reduction.

53. The General Assembly, through the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, has requested further action on efforts to integrate disaster risk reduction at the country level and to provide guidance to Member States and United Nations organizations on building and strengthening disaster resilience at the local, national and regional levels in the context of development.

D. Strengthening local level coordination

54. The Strategy secretariat strongly advocates for disaster risk reduction to be centred at the local level and, in particular, to build cities that are disaster resilient and to promote local government action. Owing to the rapid rate of urbanization, cities remain central to the disaster risk reduction and resilience agenda.

55. As highlighted in the *2013 Global Assessment Report*, rapid urban growth in hazard-prone countries and in regions with weak capacities to manage disaster risk presents a significant threat to development achievements and future investments in development. The limited incentives in urban development to invest in reducing disaster risks, together with the short-term profitability of speculative urban development and the often weak or ineffective public regulatory frameworks, is a major barrier to building resilient and sustainable cities.

56. The World Disaster Reduction Campaign on the theme "Making cities resilient: my city is getting ready", which was launched in 2010, is supporting cities in building resilience across the world (see http://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/). The Campaign now counts more than 1,400 local government signatories across more than 90 countries, who have pledged the use of the 10 essentials for making cities resilient, which serve as a guide for local governments to prioritize disaster risk reduction as a key determinant for sustainable urban development.

57. In 2012, the Campaign led the development and application of practical tools and resources to support the implementation of the 10 essentials. They include a handbook for local government leaders and the local Hyogo Framework for Action self-assessment tool, both of which are designed to empower local governments to take concrete actions to build their resilience to disasters. This year, the World Bank published *Building Urban Resilience: Principles, Tools and Practice* (available from http://www.gfdrr.org/sites/gfdrr.org/files/publication/Building_Urban_Resilience.pdf), a resource designed to give planners and practitioners a practical way to build elements of resilience into urban governance and planning. From 2013 onwards, the "Making cities resilient" Campaign, with more than 40 partners and participating cities, will continue to build local resilience while ensuring that local priorities are included in the future post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

III. Towards the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

Building a successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action

58. The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will build on the knowledge and practice developed through the implementation of the International Framework for Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction of 1989, the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation 1994, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction of 1999 and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.

59. The Mid-term Review of the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2011 (available from http://www.unisdr.org/files/18197_mtrwv.pdf) pointed to several areas that required more effort and attention, particularly in Priority 4 in reducing underlying

disaster risk factors. The document Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action: Summary of reports 2007-2013, released at the fourth session of the Global Platform (available from http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/32916), found that most progress has been qualitative, grounded in policies, legislation and planning that lay the foundation of quantitatively measurable achievements in the future. The Hyogo Framework for Action has been instrumental in highlighting the nature and impact of reducing risk — a crucial first stage. An example is the commitment of governments to the establishment of focal points and national platforms for the Hyogo Framework for Action, and the shift in mindset from crisis management to risk reduction and safety.

60. Several key messages in the consultations held to date on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction included the following:

(a) Build on the existing Hyogo Framework for Action and introduce the innovations necessary to address the challenges of increasing risk over the next 30 years; focus on addressing the drivers of risk and implementation through a pragmatic, strategic, dynamic and realistic plan for action and monitoring system; and reaffirm that local action is fundamental to reducing disaster risk;

(b) Design a clear set of principles and commitments; recognize that the reduction of disaster risk is a legal obligation, encompassing risk assessments, the establishment of early warning systems, and the right to access risk information; the progressive development and codification of international law carried on at present by the International Law Commission concerning the "protection of persons in the event of disasters" is highly relevant and welcome;

(c) Address the need to govern disaster risk reduction and resilience through strong coordination, enabled local action, and appropriate financial instruments; also, determine ways to address the transboundary nature of risk. Crucial elements include the full engagement of and incentives for the business sector, local communities and national authorities. An important principle is inclusiveness and participation — underpinning an "all of society" engagement;

(d) Enhance understanding of risk through evidence, assessments, education and public awareness; for example, the growing impact of extensive risk occurring with greater frequency and the effects of weather-related hazards on both built and exposed environments; demonstrate the effects of disasters on the national economy through analysis of loss and damages; empower communities through education and access to information; make use of advances in science and technology to communicate information on disaster risks to enhance community resilience;

(e) Leverage benefits of integrated approaches including providing guidance on integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in sustainable development. Generate information and ideas which will be beneficial to the post-2015 development agenda. Risk management to be mutually reinforcing, clearly addressed and incorporated into other global development processes.

61. The next step in the consultations on and development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction is to go even deeper into particular components. As highlighted by the Global Platform, more work is required on specific goals, targets and indicators. Specific stakeholders need to be consulted and partnerships developed to promote ownership of and commitment to the implementation, monitoring and review of systems in a new framework.

62. Of greatest importance is the need to draw on the practical experience and good practice of countries and organizations in the areas identified in the reviews and consultations to date, including: building resilience that targets those who are most vulnerable; integrating climate and disaster risk into sustainable development; grounding action at the local level; promoting women as a force in resilience-building and addressing gender equity in disaster risk reduction; designing incentives for the private sector to invest in resilience to risk disaster; fine-tuning risk assessments and using risk information in decision-making; strengthening disaster preparedness and early warning systems; ensuring that risk reduction is taken into consideration in post-disaster reconstruction as an important element of resilience-building; and mobilizing such sectors as health, education, agriculture, infrastructure and water management.

63. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/199, the Strategy secretariat will continue to ensure the continuation of extensive and inclusive multi-stakeholder consultations for a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The regional platforms will be a fundamental step in the process to develop the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and will consolidate the views, perspectives and contributions of all stakeholders. It is expected that attendance at the platforms will be at the senior political and executive levels. As such, the regional platforms will provide a very substantive and political contribution to the preparatory process of the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Preparation for the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

64. Subject to a decision of the General Assembly, the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will take place in Sendai city, Miyagi prefecture, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015. The Government of Switzerland has offered to sponsor and provide support to preparatory meetings in Geneva.

65. As decided by the Assembly, in its resolution 67/209, the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will review the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and adopt a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The Hyogo Framework for Action has highlighted the strategic and practical importance of the regional frameworks and mechanisms for disaster risk reduction in order to strengthen cooperation and stimulate stakeholders' commitment as well as to periodically review progress on implementation.

66. Against this background, the General Assembly may wish to consider that the focus of the Conference should be:

(a) To review the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action;

(b) To consider the experience gained through the regional strategies and plans for disaster risk reduction and their recommendations as well as relevant regional agreements;

(c) To adopt a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction;

(d) To identify modalities of cooperation based on stakeholders' commitments to implement a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction;

(e) To determine modalities to periodically review the implementation of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

67. The Assembly will deliberate on the modalities of the Conference and its preparatory process. Given the extensive multi-stakeholder engagement in the consultation process on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, there is an expectation that the preparatory processes for the Conference will be inclusive. In the context of the development of rules and procedures on accreditation, due consideration may be afforded to organizations which have already participated in past sessions of the global platforms for disaster risk reduction and the regional platforms and other forums for disaster risk reduction.

68. There is a strong expectation that the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will include a global forum of national platforms for disaster risk reduction, as well as the first children and youth forum for disaster risk reduction.

Post-2015 Development Agenda and Disaster Risk Reduction

69. There is now a better understanding that development cannot be sustainable if the disaster risk reduction approach is not fully integrated into development planning and investments, in both the public and private sectors. Every year, thousands of schools, hospitals and other critical infrastructure, including roads, transportation routes, electrical and power facilities and communications networks, are damaged or destroyed, thus severely affecting the economy and well-being of communities, cities and countries. Development investment that does not consider disaster risk will lead to the accumulation of more risk. As stated in the *2013 Global Assessment Report*, the world can expect losses from disasters to double by 2030 if development investments fail to account for, and address, disaster risk.

70. As discussions on a post-2015 development agenda, a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and a global agreement on climate change evolve, ensuring coherence and complementarity among the agendas is paramount. Anchoring disaster risk reduction within a new development framework, which is supported and elaborated through a successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action, will be critical for sustainable development. The overall aim is to reduce the accumulation of risk and ensure that strong action is taken to address the underlying causes of risk that potentially undermine progress on all the agendas.

71. Following the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, disaster risk reduction and building resilience are now recognized and reflected in various ongoing work streams towards the post-2015 development agenda. I am encouraged that Member States and other stakeholders are now giving due attention to disaster risk reduction.

IV. Increasing investment for disaster risk reduction

72. There is a strong case to increase investments aimed at reducing risks and building resilience. Not only do those preventative measures save lives and reduce the cost of disaster relief and economic losses, but they also support longer-term sustainable development and the protection of investments and growth.

73. While few countries are able to quantify their investments in disaster risk reduction, according to the Global Assessment Report and the Hyogo Framework for Action progress reports, there is evidence that countries are now increasing their

budget allocations for disaster risk reduction. China, for example, aims to reduce direct economic losses from disasters to less than 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product by 2015.[1] This national target is supported by a comprehensive disaster prevention and reduction plan 2011-2015, a regular allocation from the central budget, special complementary funds at the subnational level, and major investments in flood, drought and agricultural disaster risk reduction.

74. One of the key outcomes of the Group of 20 Summit held in Los Cabos, Mexico, in June 2012 was a recommendation to Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to develop disaster risk reduction tools and strategies to help reduce the impact of disasters, protect populations and assets, and manage their financial and economic impacts. As a direct consequence, the Strategy secretariat collaborated with OECD and the World Bank to produce the Group of 20/OECD Methodological Framework on Disaster Risk Assessment and Risk Financing (available from http://www.oecd.org/gov/risk/G20disasterriskmanagement.pdf). The Framework helps finance ministries and other governmental authorities to develop more effective disaster risk management strategies and, in particular, financial strategies, building on strengthened risk assessment and risk financing.

75. In 2012, the Strategy secretariat and the European Commission's Directorate for Development and Cooperation launched a three-year initiative to support up to 40 countries in risk-proofing their public investments. The first year resulted in the creation of 13 to 15 disaster loss databases in three regions, 10 to 12 national risk assessments and generation of materials to mainstream disaster risk reduction into public investment, land use planning and climate change adaptation. Those tools provide decision makers with the information and evidence they need to make risk-informed investment decisions.

Funding of the Strategy secretariat

76. Disaster risk reduction and building of resilience is a growing area of work. Member States and other stakeholders understand and support the principle that it pays to invest in prevention, preparedness and plans to reduce disaster risks. At the same time, reducing risk is a complex and challenging task. There are many entry points and components.

77. The work of my Special Representative and the core work of the Strategy secretariat in the guardianship of the Hyogo Framework for Action; the consultations and development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction; the global, regional, national and local level guidance to stakeholders and partners, including the United Nations system; the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*; and the "Making cities resilient" and other campaigns all facilitate the leadership, coordination, gathering of evidence and advocacy required to deliver on disaster risk reduction.

78. For the biennium 2012-2013, the Strategy secretariat set a resource target of $64.9 million to fulfil this work. In 2012, annual funds channelled to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction totalled $33.1 million. Contributions were received from a total of 26 donors. This signals donor confidence in the strategic direction of the secretariat and enhanced programme delivery, despite the increasing financial pressure on aid budgets in many donor countries.

79. The Strategy secretariat is broadening its donor base and securing increases in unearmarked funding from donors, where possible on a multi-year basis. This is critically important to ensure uninterrupted programme delivery given the expectations and demands placed on the Strategy secretariat. In 2012, multi-year funding agreements were negotiated and implemented with the Governments of Australia, Finland, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

80. The regular budget of the United Nations provides support for one senior position (D-1 level) in the Strategy secretariat. With a growing interest and priority in disaster risk reduction, the Strategy secretariat requires funding that is appropriately predictable and stable.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

81. Evidence suggests that over the past eight years, the exposure of people and assets to disasters has been rising. There is an increasing risk of losses in social progress, health, well-being, employment opportunities, security and economic development. The empowerment of communities and local governments to identify and manage their everyday risks is a sound basis for building strategies, programmes and budgets. Public institutions and business entities alike need to move towards a more comprehensive risk management approach.

82. To reduce existing disaster risk is not sufficient. Bolder and more focused action is necessary to pre-empt the further accumulation of risk. This requires a much closer look at the causes and drivers of risk, and in particular the development planning models and modalities for public and private investment. It is critical to increase the efforts to foster a public culture of prevention, where people have public and free access to simple, usable and clear risk information upon which to take action in the conduct of business — be it in the public or private sector.

83. In the forthcoming two years, focus must remain on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the pursuit of further concrete results in the areas of safety of schools, hospitals and other critical infrastructures, establishment of disaster loss databases, dissemination of information on risk assessment, raising of public awareness, sensitization of the business sector and the establishment of early warning mechanisms. The International Day for Disaster Reduction on 13 October 2013 will be an opportunity to engage with, and raise awareness of, persons living with disabilities in the context of disaster risk.

84. Further work will need to be done on gathering more data and specific national experiences on the elements for a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The leading work of the International Law Commission is a critical contribution to the definition of effective normative frameworks and the principles that guide and underpin the reduction of disaster risk. Work on improving national coordination mechanisms, including national platforms, will be important in realizing the Hyogo Framework for Action and any future framework for disaster risk reduction.

85. The Strategy secretariat will lead a work process with all stakeholders on targets and indicators for the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, building on the experiences of countries and all stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the Hyogo Framework for Action. This work will represent an

important contribution to the ongoing discussions on measurements for the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals.

86. The third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 is a much anticipated event. In the consultations on the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction, all stakeholders have demonstrated goodwill and the determination to collaborate and find creative and innovative solutions to address the common challenges ahead. The inclusivity of the consultative process is generating momentum, buy-in and commitment of all stakeholders. The World Conference will need to be as inclusive as possible. The regional platforms for disaster risk reduction, to take place in the first half of 2014, will provide stakeholders the opportunity to generate further engagement and momentum towards the World Conference and contribute policy insights and knowledge to the development of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

87. The third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will aim for Member States to adopt a post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction with the support of and commitments from all stakeholders and also make a contribution to the post-2015 development and climate change agendas.

88. The United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience will ensure that the United Nations system provides the necessary coherent support to countries for the further implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, the development of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, and the preparation for the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

89. The aspirations and goals of sustainable development, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction must not be seen in isolation. Therefore, consideration must be given to disaster risk reduction and the building of resilience to disasters within the post-2015 development agenda in order to promote a complementary, mutually reinforcing and coherent approach between the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and the post-2015 development agenda.

90. **In the light of the above, I recommend that:**

(a) **Member States continue the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, and, in particular, that they collect data on losses and damages, strengthen the resilience of schools and hospitals, and ensure that any new critical infrastructure is disaster resilient;**

(b) **Member States and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and local communities, devote focused efforts to identify and address the causes of risk accumulation, in particular in the context of new investments, both public and private;**

(c) **The preparatory process for the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction build on the critical contributions of the fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the regional platforms, be inclusive, and allow for the active engagement, buy-in and commitment of all stakeholders;**

(d) **Member States carry out national multi-stakeholder consultations to prepare for the upcoming regional platforms and the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, and establish, strengthen or**

conduct peer reviews of, as appropriate, national platforms or similar mechanisms to facilitate consultations;

(e) Member States and relevant stakeholders participate in the upcoming regional platforms with senior-level delegations and with representation from institutions, local governments, the private sector, the sciences, and civil society in order to share views, expectations and recommendations on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction;

(f) Member States address disaster risk reduction in the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals;

(g) Member States consider predictable resources and support for the further strengthening of the Strategy secretariat as it leads the consultations towards agreement on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and support the preparation and organization of the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, while continuing to support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

United Nations A/68/321

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 August 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 19 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 67/203, provides an update on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and on the implementation of the resolution. It highlights the role of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in reviewing the overall follow-up to the Conference and, more generally, progress in sustainable development and new and emerging issues.

* A/68/150.

13-42839 (E) 130913

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides information on the progress made in implementing General Assembly resolution 67/203, by which the Assembly called in particular for coherence, synergy and mutual support among follow-up processes to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. At the time of preparation of the present report, various processes launched at the Conference were ongoing, such as the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. There has also been an ambitious process of reflection and consultation on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. Moving forward, there is need to ensure greater coherence and mutual support among these various processes within the broader framework of the post-2015 development agenda.

2. The present report should be read in conjunction with other reports submitted to the General Assembly on sustainable development.

II. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

3. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was held from 20 to 22 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20 years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

4. It was the largest United Nations Conference ever, gathering not only world leaders but also an impressive number of non-State actors, including representatives of the nine major groups created by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as well as foundations and philanthropic organizations, academia and others.

5. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), launched several intergovernmental processes, which are at various stages of implementation.

A. Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

6. In January 2013, the General Assembly established the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and welcomed its membership (General Assembly decision 67/555). To date, the Open Working Group has held four sessions under the co-chairmanship of Macharia Kamau (Kenya) and Csaba Kőrösi (Hungary). It will hold four further sessions, and aims to complete the stock-taking and information-gathering phase of its work in February 2014. Thereafter, the Open Working Group is expected to begin preparing its proposal for sustainable development goals for the consideration of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

7. At its first session, the Open Working Group had a broad exchange of views. At the second session, the Group considered two issues, namely, conceptualizing the sustainable development goals and poverty eradication. At the third session, the Group considered food security and nutrition; sustainable agriculture; desertification, land degradation and drought; and water and sanitation. At its fourth

session, the Open Working Group focused on employment and decent work for all; social protection; education and culture, with youth as a cross-cutting issue; and health, population dynamics. The Group will hold another five sessions between now and February 2014.[1]

8. The following main ideas have emerged from the work of the Open Working Group thus far:

(a) The Millennium Development Goals are the point of departure for the development of sustainable development goals. Completing the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals on poverty eradication and other important social objectives must figure centrally in the post-2015 development agenda. At the same time, the sustainable development goals must be more ambitious and must be at the centre of a transformational agenda;

(b) The sustainable development goals should reinforce and build upon international commitments in the economic, social and environmental fields undertaken at United Nations conferences and summits and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development;

(c) Poverty eradication is multidimensional and remains the overarching objective of the international community. It needs to be central to a proposal on sustainable development goals;

(d) The sustainable development goals must be universal and applicable to all countries, which means that they must be flexible enough that countries at different levels of development and with different national priorities can have ownership of them. They will need a strong bottom-up engagement through broad consultation in their formulation. The voices of the poor and vulnerable especially need to be heard;

(e) A global dashboard of goals and targets could be a way of reflecting common but differentiated responsibilities and adjusting the goals to national circumstances;

(f) The sustainable development goals will need to draw on strategies and approaches to sustainable development that exploit effectively the critical interrelationships and key drivers of change and support it with appropriate means of implementation. The sustainable development agenda has to be supported by transformative change and shifts in order to realize the vision of sustainable poverty eradication and universal human development that nurtures respect for human dignity, protects our planet and promotes harmony with nature for the well-being and happiness of present and future generations.

B. Institutional framework for sustainable development: high-level political forum on sustainable development

9. Another critical outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was the establishment of a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum to follow up on the implementation of sustainable development.

[1] For the programme of work see http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1778Pow2805.pdf.

10. In July 2013, the General Assembly decided on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum (resolution 67/290).

11. The high-level political forum will be a hybrid process: it will meet every four years for two days under the auspices of the General Assembly at the level of Heads of State and Government and every year under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment within the framework of the substantive session of the Council. It will replace the annual ministerial review in 2016. The forum's meetings will result in negotiated declarations.

12. The inaugural meeting of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly will take place at the level of Heads of State and Government on 24 September 2013, while the first meeting of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, including three days at the ministerial level, will take place in 2014.

13. The meetings of the high-level political forum will provide for the full and effective participation of all States Members of the United Nations and States members of the specialized agencies. The Assembly encouraged broad participation by the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and other relevant intergovernmental organizations, including the World Trade Organization. It also decided on modalities to enhance the participation and consultative role of major groups and other stakeholders.

14. The General Assembly mandated the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to support the forum in close cooperation with all relevant entities of the United Nations system, including funds and programmes, multilateral financial and trade institutions, the secretariats of the Rio conventions and other relevant treaty bodies and international organizations within their respective mandates. The expanded Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA plus)[2] will be used to engage the United Nations system and other entities in supporting the work of the forum.

15. The functions that the General Assembly envisioned for the forum encompass those highlighted in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (see resolution 66/288, annex, para. 86). The forum will have a thematic focus reflecting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, in line with the thematic focus of the activities of the Economic and Social Council and consistent with the post-2015 development agenda (see resolution 67/290). It will also discuss specific sustainable development challenges facing least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and Africa, as well as sustainable development challenges faced by middle-income countries.

16. The forum, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, will also conduct regular reviews of the implementation of sustainable development commitments by countries and United Nations entities, starting in 2016. Those reviews will replace the national voluntary presentations held in the context of the annual ministerial reviews of the Council and build on the experiences and lessons

[2] See http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/unsystem.html.

learned in that context (ibid.). The forum will also take into account the work of the Development Cooperation Forum.

C. Strengthening the science-policy interface

17. One of the roles of the forum is to strengthen the science-policy interface and enhance evidence-based decision-making at all levels. As recognized at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the documentation prepared for the forum must enable it to fulfil this role. In 2014, the forum will consider the scope and methodology of a global sustainable development report, based on a proposal of the Secretary-General reflecting the views from Member States and relevant United Nations entities, including the Committee on Development Policy.

18. This year, the Secretariat has produced a pilot version of the global sustainable development report[3] in order to facilitate the discussion and decision-making of Member States and other stakeholders.

19. The report maps existing sustainable development assessments and related processes and provides science digests of issues not contained in the assessments. It highlights emerging issues identified by scientists. It also contains policy issues for consideration.

D. Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing

20. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Heads of State and Government also decided to establish an intergovernmental process under the auspices of the General Assembly, to assess financing needs, consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks and evaluate additional initiatives, with a view to preparing a report proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 255).

21. An intergovernmental committee comprising 30 experts nominated by regional groups, with equitable geographical representation, has been tasked to implement this process, and to conclude its work by 2014. The committee was established by the General Assembly in June 2013 (decision 67/559). The first session of the committee will be held from 28 to 30 August 2013 in New York. Member States and other interested parties will be briefed on the work of the committee, as requested in resolution 67/203.

22. The committee is expected to draw on technical support from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations system and to conduct its work through open and broad consultation with relevant international and regional financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

[3] See http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1621.

E. Options for facilitating the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies

23. With respect to the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the General Assembly on technology facilitation, four workshops were convened in April and May 2013 by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. They drew from the knowledge and perspectives of over 20 thinkers and practitioners from academia, research institutions and non-governmental organizations.

24. The report of the Secretary-General on options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies (A/67/348) provides recommendations for the way forward. The workshops allowed participants to better appreciate the range of opinions on the subject and the complexity of issues, which must be well understood before further action can receive consensual support. Numerous issues are likely to benefit from a continued substantive dialogue.

F. Sustainable consumption and production

25. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development reaffirmed that sustainable consumption and production patterns are essential requirements for sustainable development, as established in the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development also reaffirmed commitments to phase out harmful and inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption and undermine sustainable development. Governments also strengthened their commitment to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production by adopting the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns elaborated at the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

26. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex) provides the vision, functions, organizational structure, means of implementation and criteria for programme design. The aims of the 10-year framework include facilitating access to support and financing, in particular for developing countries, awareness-raising, information-sharing and fostering innovation and new ideas. The framework also provides an initial, non-exhaustive list of five programmes covering consumer information; sustainable lifestyles and education; sustainable public procurement; sustainable buildings and construction; and sustainable tourism, including ecotourism.

27. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), within its current mandate, was requested to serve as the secretariat of the 10-year framework, and was invited to establish a voluntary trust fund to support implementation of the framework, in particular its programmes and initiatives. At its sixty-seventh session, the General Assembly decided on the composition and nomination process of a 10-member board with 2 members from each regional group (see resolution 67/203). Nominations for the board have been received from all regional groups. The General Assembly designated the Economic and Social Council as the ad interim Member State body to receive reports from the board and the secretariat for the framework.

28. National focal points are being nominated by Member States to ensure close coordination and engagement with the 10-year framework. An inter-agency coordination group was established in May 2013 to support the implementation of the framework. It will be co-chaired for the first two-year cycle by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs jointly with UNEP.

29. The General Assembly, in its elaboration of the formal and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, decided that the forum could provide recommendations to the board of the framework, as well as to UNEP as the secretariat of the framework, taking into account their reports (see resolution 67/290).

G. Partnerships and voluntary commitments

30. Renewed commitment to revitalizing partnerships was an important part of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, together with voluntary commitments that emphasized outcomes rather than just the composition of partnerships.

31. Partnerships and voluntary commitments are not a substitute for Government responsibilities and intergovernmentally agreed commitments; they are intended to strengthen implementation by involving those stakeholders that can make a contribution to sustainable development.

32. The Sustainable Development in Action registry of the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform compiles information on voluntary commitments registered at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and partnerships registered by the Commission on Sustainable Development from the World Summit on Sustainable Development. They are on various topics, such as energy, water, sustainable transport, waste management, sustainable cities, mining and sustainable tourism. The voluntary commitments of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development seek to be specific, measurable, achievable, resource-based and time-bound.[4]

Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States

33. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Member States reaffirmed that small island developing States were a special case for sustainable development. They called for the convening of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014. Samoa made the gracious offer to host the Conference and the General Assembly decided to hold the Conference from 1 to 4 September 2014, to be preceded by activities related to the Conference from 28 to 30 August 2014 (decision 67/558).

34. In November 2012, the Secretary-General appointed the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs to serve as the Secretary-General of the Conference. The secretariat of the Conference is housed in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with the involvement of all the relevant parts of the United Nations system.

[4] See http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/930Report%20on%20Voluntary%20Commitments%20and%20Partnerships.pdf.

35. The ongoing preparations are led by small island developing States and are guided by General Assembly resolution 67/207, in which the basic objectives of the Conference were outlined, namely: (a) to assess the progress and gaps in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of small island developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action, (b) to seek renewed political commitment for the same, (c) to identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities and ways to address them, including through collaborative partnership, and (d) to identify priorities for the sustainable development of small island developing States in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

36. The preparations are being carried out at the national, regional and global levels. At the national level, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported local consultancy for national reports of small island developing States, where possible. Country consultations on the post-2015 development agenda were also taken into account in the national preparatory process for the Conference. All completed reports of national consultations are available on the Conference website.[5] Regional overview synthesis reports will be prepared on the basis of the national reports from the small island developing States of each region.

37. Regional meetings were held in all three small island developing States regions[6] in July 2013. The regional meetings were structured around the four objectives enumerated above, with regional variations and depending on the host country preferences. These outcomes fed into the interregional report that will be the basis for the interregional meeting that will take place in Barbados from 26 to 28 August 2013.[5]

38. The global preparatory process is expected to be launched at the end of 2013 (see General Assembly resolution 67/207). The General Assembly will define further modalities of the Conference at the main part of its sixty-eighth session.

39. The substance of the four preparatory meetings revolves around the four major objectives of the Conference mentioned above. The main messages are as follows:

(a) There is a strong commitment by small island developing States to taking full ownership of sustainable development, eradicating poverty, building resilience and delivering quality outcomes;

(b) There is a need for a transformational strategy to ensure acceleration of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to integrate priority sustainable development issues into the post-2015 development agenda;

(c) There is a need for an effective high-level political forum that addresses the priorities of small island developing States, including an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

40. As the host country, Samoa has expressed a desire to bring partnerships into sharp focus as an additional key outcome of the Conference, which would entail announcing new partnerships at the Conference but also featuring ongoing partnerships that can be held up as best practices. ECESA plus and the Department

[5] For these reports and further updated developments see www.sids2014.org.

[6] The Caribbean; Pacific; and Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea regions.

of Economic and Social Affairs have been encouraging efforts within the United Nations system to spearhead initiatives to strengthen existing partnerships, notably in five concrete thematic areas of particular importance to small island developing States: climate change, oceans and seas, waste management, sustainable tourism and natural disaster resilience.

H. Intergenerational solidarity

41. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development underlines the need for promotion of intergenerational solidarity for the achievement of sustainable development, taking into account the needs of future generations. The Secretary-General has produced a report on this topic, including the related conceptual framework and institutional arrangements, for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session (A/68/322).

42. In May 2013, the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized an expert panel on intergenerational solidarity aimed at providing an opportunity for stakeholders to exchange views on the topic of intergenerational solidarity and future generations, including a conceptual framework and institutional arrangements, with a view to informing continued consideration of the topic.

43. The main issues raised were as follows:

(a) Concerns for future generations need to be included in decision-making processes at all levels;

(b) A framework for intergenerational solidarity has to start with a set of shared values and principles that are clear and flexible enough to be acceptable in different cultures and political systems;

(c) Access to education and health is one of the determining factors for the development of future generations, and investments need to be increased in this area;

(d) There is a need to include the younger generation in the decision-making processes, and the high-level political forum could set an example.

I. Mainstreaming of sustainable development in the United Nations system

44. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development called for the further mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system, and requested the Secretary-General to report through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly on progress made in that regard.

45. The report of the Secretary-General (A/68/79-E/2013/69) was discussed in the Economic and Social Council in July 2013. The report describes how the United Nations system has accumulated experience in supporting integrated approaches to economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. At the same time, it recognizes that mainstreaming sustainable development remains a

complex endeavour that implies rethinking the way the United Nations conceives its analytical and operational work and its support to intergovernmental processes.

46. Studies have shown that Governments attach great importance to the support of the United Nations in the area of sustainable development. Within individual United Nations system organizations, strategic plans are an important tool for driving the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into policies and operations. The governing bodies of a number of organizations are currently developing new strategic plans, which should provide the opportunity to align the objectives and activities of organizations, not only with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, but also with sustainable development.

47. The United Nations Development Group also has a key role to play by providing guidance on integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development through the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, where they are in place.

48. Only if United Nations system organizations work closely together at all levels, including in cooperation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, can they support sustainable development. Regional commissions and the regional United Nations Development Group teams remain key players at the regional level, as are the regional coordination mechanisms.

49. At the international level, a wealth of inter-agency mechanisms help United Nations organizations to work together to support policy coherence and integrated approaches. Thus, the Environment Management Group has developed an environment and social sustainability framework. The high-level political forum could build on these initial efforts to develop a framework for further mainstreaming sustainable development into the United Nations system that would benefit the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

III. Coherence and coordination of the follow-up processes in the context of the post-2015 development agenda

50. The present section reviews how the different tracks of the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development come together in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and explores how the high-level political forum and the United Nations system could best serve as an umbrella for these various endeavours.

51. Sustainable development and poverty eradication are now firmly recognized as the overarching objectives of development for the post-2015 period.[7] The principles of sustainable development will be encompassed in the set of universal sustainable development goals that Member States will adopt in 2015.

52. The challenges in the coming months and years will be threefold. First, there must be consistency of messages and directions across all the United Nations

[7] See, for example, the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 development agenda entitled "A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development". See also the report of the United Nations system Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda entitled "Realizing the future we want for all", and General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the format and modalities of the high-level political forum.

processes. Secondly, synergies have to be found among processes so that they are fully supportive of each other. Thirdly, a critical challenge will be to achieve in practice the ambitious goal set up in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development. Because of its broad functions of providing leadership and reviewing progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, the high-level political forum has a critical role to play in achieving those three objectives. In particular, the high-level political forum will be the legitimate forum to discuss and coordinate the ongoing post-Conference processes until they all reach their conclusion in 2015. Beyond 2015, it should address the post-2015 development agenda, which will have sustainable development as an underpinning principle, along with a strong focus on poverty eradication and a set of sustainable development goals at its core.

53. In August 2012, immediately after the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Secretary-General wrote to all the United Nations system principals inviting them to work together to implement Conference decisions and attaching a matrix for following up on the mandates.[8] The implementation matrix is to serve as an accountability framework and a working tool to promote and monitor progress. It is being updated regularly to reflect progress and new initiatives.[9]

54. In the post-Conference phase, the United Nations system continues to remain engaged through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its subsidiary bodies, as well as ECESA plus. Ad hoc inter-agency mechanisms have been set up to support the work of the Open Working Group on the sustainable development goals[10] as well as the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing.[11]

A. Role of the high-level political forum in strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development

55. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development created the high-level political forum with the explicit purpose of strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development. The functions of the high-level forum, as defined in paragraph 85 of the outcome document of the Conference and elaborated in General Assembly resolution 67/290, form an ambitious agenda that could contribute to the advancement of sustainable development, including in the United Nations system. The challenge will be to give shape to these functions in a way that strengthens the institutional framework for sustainable development as a whole and serves the objectives supported by the various functions in a concrete way that adds value.

56. The establishment of a strong high-level political forum should proceed in tandem with the strengthening of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, to avoid the fragmentation of their agendas and allow for an integrated consideration of sustainable development. The high-level political forum,

[8] See http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1138SG%20Letter%20and%20Rio%20Implementation%20Matrix%20-%2002%20August%202012%20First%20Version.pdf.

[9] See http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/unsystem.html.

[10] See http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549.

[11] See http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1557.

together with a revitalized General Assembly and a strengthened Economic and Social Council, should be part of the strengthened governance for sustainable development. Sustainable development should become the guiding principle of work of all United Nations bodies, and those bodies should work in partnership to advance sustainable development. This could be facilitated through a focus by the Assembly and the Council on the report of the forum and its policy decisions and recommendations. The forum could also help to promote the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda by providing a solid framework for considering the three dimensions of the sustainable development goals as well as through its ability to address new issues and react to immediate challenges that might arise.

57. In its resolution 67/290 the General Assembly stressed that the forum should provide a dynamic platform for regular dialogue and for stocktaking and agenda-setting to advance sustainable development, and enumerated other functions. However, it did not fully define how the various functions would contribute to the achievement of the objectives outlined above and to the success of the other follow-up processes to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The aim of the present section is to do this, focusing on functions that are not fully explored in the resolution.

58. Given that the high-level political forum builds on the Commission on Sustainable Development, it can effectively use lessons learned from 20 years of practice of the Commission to advance and strengthen its work. The present report makes use of the lessons reviewed in the recent report of the Secretary-General on lessons learned from the Commission on Sustainable Development (A/67/757).

59. The first function outlined in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development. Lessons from the experience of the Commission on Sustainable Development show that the existence of a clear institutional home for sustainable development in the United Nations system played a critical role in furthering the reach and acceptance of the concept from 1992 to 2012.

60. The high-level political forum has a critical agenda-setting role to play. The Commission on Sustainable Development played an important role in setting the international agenda on sustainable development. Furthermore, as the incubator and catalyst for intergovernmental discussions on emerging topics the Commission played a role in creating new intergovernmental processes which resulted in recommendations to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council on such topics as forests, chemicals, energy and oceans. This role of incubator and catalyst should be preserved, as it was specific to the Commission, and the high-level political forum is the most practical and legitimate place in the United Nations system to host such discussions. Lessons from the Commission show that in order for this agenda-setting function to be most effective, the forum must be able to attract high-level decision makers representing the different dimensions of sustainable development. Ensuring that this remains the case beyond the initial sessions of the forum should be a priority. Thought must also be given to how the forum can mobilize United Nations system organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and other intergovernmental organizations, such as the World Trade Organization, to contribute to its work, as mandated by the General Assembly (resolution 67/290, para. 17).

61. The Commission on Sustainable Development has also been the only place where implementation of the outcomes of global conferences on small island developing States has been monitored and reviewed. Support provided to the small island developing States will have to continue, not only through the provision of Secretariat support to the Third International Conference on small island developing States, but also through continued provision of analytical and technical support to build the capacities of the small island developing States and their ability to network with each other. This mandate was strengthened in resolution 67/290 as it underlined the need to discuss the specific sustainable development challenges of the most vulnerable countries, including small island developing States, with the aim of enhancing engagement and implementing commitments and recognized the specific challenges facing the middle-income countries in achieving sustainable development.

62. Lastly, the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, acting on recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development, served as the initial home for expert processes that were later transformed into fully-fledged initiatives, including on sustainable consumption and production, sustainable procurement and environmental management accounting. The forum could continue to provide impetus to nascent processes that are at the forefront of sustainability practice.

63. The functions set out in paragraphs 85 (b) and (g) of the outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex) relate to the need for the forum to enhance integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels and to improve cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system. This has previously been perhaps the most elusive goal, at all levels. Integration faces many obstacles. The main obstacle is the fact that institutional settings at national, regional and international levels continue to be organized along sectoral lines. Over the years, many institutional arrangements have been tried in order to better coordinate decision-making and implementation across sectors. At the international level, those have included the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development with its system of task managers, as well as attempts to increase the role of the regional commissions in increasing regional implementation of Agenda 21. The perception is that mixed results have been achieved thus far. The challenge for the future of the high-level political forum will therefore be to find integrated approaches to the three dimensions of sustainable development in policies and activities both in international policymaking and in the work of the United Nations system. Also critical will be the practical provisions that will be put in place in the Economic and Social Council regarding the Council's role in achieving integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development as mandated by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

64. In this regard, in his report (A/68/79-E/2013/69), the Secretary-General identifies ways for the United Nations system to further mainstream sustainable development. He underlines that commitment at the highest level of the United Nations system bolstered by clear and coherent intergovernmental guidance is an important precondition for further mainstreaming of sustainable development. Such guidance should come, in particular, through the high-level political forum, given its role in guiding the work of United Nations intergovernmental bodies and organizations. This would help Member States to send a unified message to United Nations system organizations, including through their respective governing bodies.

65. One dimension that will need to be explored is how to improve the links between global, regional and national policy processes for sustainable development. This was a weakness of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which, although it was visible soon after the establishment of the Commission, was never satisfactorily addressed; decisions taken by the Commission did not trickle down to the regional or the national level. The reasons for this included the perception in national policy circles that the Commission was an environmental forum. This perception was fuelled by a lack of participation of non-environmental agencies and ministries in the preparatory process for the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development. National and regional preparatory processes did not significantly contribute to the global discussions taking place in the Commission on Sustainable Development, except on special occasions, such as the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, where national inputs were the basis for global negotiation.

66. The forum will inherit this issue from the Commission on Sustainable Development. In particular, inputs from the regional and national levels need to be given an appropriate space in the forum. They should be reflected in the forum's policy decisions. This would increase the ownership of these decisions and lead to improved implementation.

67. Based on past experience, this would likely require a combination of measures to: (a) create a robust preparatory process for the sessions of the forum, including capacity-building for countries to prepare submissions based on national reviews of implementation and of national sustainable development-related strategies; (b) ensure a strong focus from the secretariat of the forum on monitoring of implementation at all levels, including through tighter collaboration with the regional commissions in strengthening sustainable development as an overarching framework for the work of the commissions; (c) conduct robust regional processes to prepare for the forum's meetings under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, geared to discussing issues specific to each region and contributing to global policy outcomes by developing recommendations for the forum and to ensure that global policy decisions are relevant at the regional and national levels; (d) support implementation at national and regional levels; and (e) enhance interregional cooperation, where appropriate, for example through interregional dialogues in the forum, building also on regional dialogues conducted in the Economic and Social Council.

68. It has always been the central role of the Commission on Sustainable Development to monitor and review progress in the implementation of the sustainable development commitments contained in Agenda 21 and in the outcomes of subsequent international conferences, including means of implementation. This was done through dedicated annual reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly; thematic reports of the Secretary-General on the themes of the Commission on Sustainable Development, focusing on review and policy; and specific projects, such as the reviews of implementation of Agenda 21 and the Rio Principles prepared by the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.[12] The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on

[12] See sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sd21.html.

Sustainable Development and resolution 67/290 reaffirm that the forum should play such a role, which will be even more critical after 2015, as it becomes necessary to the monitor and review the implementation of sustainable development goals. The monitoring of commitments related to means of implementation, which was a weakness in the past, will also need to be strengthened.

69. An important challenge for the forum will be to sustain and deepen the engagement of major groups and other stakeholders, a domain in which the Commission on Sustainable Development was a pioneer and standard-setter in the United Nations. Major groups have provided invaluable inputs to intergovernmental work on sustainable development. For example, most of the new ideas contained in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development were initially proposed or supported by major groups. In its resolution 67/290, the General Assembly retained the modalities for civil society engagement of the Commission on Sustainable Development for the forum.

70. Another dimension of the forum's work will be to define how it relates to voluntary, multi-stakeholder partnerships for the achievement and implementation of sustainable development. While partnerships ("type II partnerships") were officially recognized at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development generated a significant number of voluntary commitments, the place of such commitments in the institutional framework for sustainable development remains to be fully understood and developed. Important issues include the status of these commitments next to more traditional types of commitments, their monitoring and the accountability of those who made them.

71. Enhancing the science-policy interface was not a function that was explicitly included in the mandate of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1992, but has been emphasized in both the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and in General Assembly resolution 67/290, in response to evidence that a comprehensive assessment across the various dimensions of sustainable development was not being delivered by the existing United Nations institutional framework. This goes well beyond channelling some scientific inputs into the intergovernmental process, as was done in the Commission on Sustainable Development through thematic reports produced by the Secretary-General and interaction of delegates with the scientific and technology community at the Commission sessions. Fulfilling this mandate will be a complex task and will require increased resources, as it involves analysis of hundreds of sectoral assessments and ongoing coordination of the work with many agencies of the United Nations system.

72. Paragraph 85 (l) of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex) provides that the forum could enhance evidence-based decision-making at all levels and contribute to strengthening ongoing capacity-building for data collection and analysis in developing countries. This is a function that the Commission on Sustainable Development used to assume, along with other United Nations and non-United Nations entities, such as the Statistics Division of the Secretariat. In particular, the Commission both produced normative work and promoted capacity-building on sustainable development indicators and on the design and implementation of national sustainable development strategies. There is still an important gap in

capacity in developing countries with respect to building and implementing systems of sustainable development indicators. This translates into a lack of systematic monitoring and a disconnect between national realities and international work. The forum would have a strong role to play in helping developing countries in this regard. This would also mean strengthening support to help developing countries use the forum to their benefit and inject national and regional realities into its work.

73. The Commission on Sustainable Development also supported technical and policy work at the national level through technical cooperation, in particular for water, energy and small island developing States, often in collaboration with United Nations agencies with sectoral mandates. The value added of the forum compared with the Commission could be to bring an integrated perspective to such work.

74. In summary, the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development lists 12 functions for the forum, which are also reflected in different ways in resolution 67/290. All functions, especially those that are new, require substantive support. Based on this brief overview, and given the objective stated in the outcome document of strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development through the creation of the forum, it seems clear that the forum should receive adequate support and resources if it is to perform these functions. It would be also essential to realize the purpose of the institutional reform that Member States envisioned at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

B. The forum as a home for building synergies among follow-up processes to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

75. In addition to discharging its agreed functions on a regular basis, the forum will have a critical role to play in the next two years to ensure that all the ongoing processes that were set in motion at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as reviewed above, contribute in a coherent and efficient way to the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. The present section examines how these processes fit into the forum, and looks at the synergies that need to be achieved across these processes.

Sustainable development goals

76. It is widely acknowledged, both inside and outside the United Nations system, that the sustainable development goals will provide the new reference framework for development and development cooperation beyond 2015. This represents a significant clarification in comparison with the situation immediately after the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, when it was not clear how the sustainable development goals would relate to potential successor goals to the Millennium Development Goals. This clarification offers the potential, for the first time, to have a unified framework for development and development cooperation under the sustainable development goals, bringing together the thus far estranged streams of traditional development cooperation and international cooperation for sustainable development. It also implies a reconceptualization of development cooperation, linked with the universality of the sustainable development goals.

77. While the elaboration of the sustainable development goals will be done through its own dedicated intergovernmental process (the Open Working Group), linking the sustainable development goals to other work streams has already appeared a necessity within that process. During the discussions of the Open Working Group, many Member States have mentioned the imperative of clarifying the means of implementation of the sustainable development goals. Many have expressed the need for consistency and synergies between the work of the Open Working Group and that of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Financing for Sustainable Development. As these two streams of work progress, coordination by Member States will be critical. The secretariat of the forum, which supports both processes, can also facilitate such coordination.

78. After the sustainable development goals are adopted, it is to be expected that they will serve as the global reference for assessing progress on development and development cooperation issues, in the same manner as the Millennium Development Goals became the reference point for monitoring success on development issues that were linked with the Goals. There will therefore be a critical monitoring function associated with the sustainable development goals. This role could be played by the forum, supported by annual reports integrating the various contributions of the United Nations system as a whole. In addition, there will be a role for the international community in building the capacity of Member States to build appropriate statistical systems for monitoring progress on the sustainable development goals and the targets that will be adopted by countries in relation to the goals.

79. In order for the sustainable development goals to really take hold, it will be critical to link them to national strategies, goals and targets. The high-level political forum can provide guidance to the United Nations and other efforts to design national development strategies and plans so that an integrated approach can be taken to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. This could be linked with capacity-building on sustainable development indicators.

80. Technology, another dimension of the means of implementation for sustainable development, is currently being discussed in the post-Rio context through the discussions of the General Assembly on a technology facilitation mechanism. Going forward, it will be important to enable these discussions to fully support the sustainable development goals, which can be done by the high-level political forum.

Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing

81. The work of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing provides a timely opportunity to re-examine the role of financing for sustainable development in a changed post-2015 and post-Rio Conference context. In this regard, three aspects will be critical: (a) providing options to devise a financing framework for a renewed partnership for sustainable development beyond 2015; (b) providing solid foundations for the financing of sustainable development goals; and (c) linking the financing discussions for the post-2015 development agenda to the existing discussions on financing for development in follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002 and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the

Monterrey Consensus, held in Doha in 2008, as well as with the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council.

82. The Commission on Sustainable Development had a mandate to review on a regular basis the adequacy of funding and mechanisms for achieving sustainable development, as well as commitments in the area of technology transfer (see General Assembly resolution 47/191). However, its added value and impact in this area remained limited. The adequacy of financing for meeting the needs and the requirements and commitments identified in Agenda 21 has remained a contentious issue during all of the 21 years since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held.

83. Given the importance of financing issues in the overall discussions on sustainable development, it will be critical for the forum to find a way to enable meaningful discussions and progress in this area. This is all the more important as a unified framework for development beyond 2015 would require bringing together the thus far disjointed discussions on, among other things, traditional development financing, climate finance and biodiversity finance. Guiding such discussions would fit the agenda-setting function of the high-level political forum. Thus, the objective would be to provide consistency and coherence to discussions taking place in various thematic forums, while respecting their respective mandates.

84. In a context in which the sustainable development goals are to provide the overarching goals and targets for international development cooperation, it will be critical to clarify issues related to the means of implementation of the goals. As discussed above, this has been articulated repeatedly in the discussions of the Open Working Group. A financing strategy for sustainable development should provide concrete proposals relating to the financing of the sustainable development goals going forward. While the goals will likely be agreed after the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts finishes its work, this should not inhibit the Committee from working on thematic areas that are likely to be included in the sustainable development goals or on a concrete proposal in terms of mobilization of resources for agreed development objectives. After the Committee concludes its work, the forum will have a critical role to play in monitoring and reviewing the means of implementation linked with sustainable development goals and in providing guidance on how to improve them.

85. Lastly, within the context of a unified sustainable development cooperation framework, the forum can have an important role in ensuring the interface between the discussions on the means of implementation for the sustainable development agenda and the financing for development process as the follow-up to the Monterrey and Doha conferences. The 2008 Doha Declaration on Financing for Development called for reinvigorating the global partnership for development in order to effectively address the full range of financing for development challenges facing the world, including additional costs of climate change mitigation and adaptation and damage to the Earth's environment (see General Assembly resolution 63/239, annex, para. 80). However, some of those areas have their own dedicated processes within the United Nations, often in the form of independent conventions. Member States, through resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, have stressed the need to reinforce coherence and coordination and to avoid duplication of effort between the work of the Intergovernmental Committee of

Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and the financing for development process.

Other follow-up processes to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

86. Other processes mandated by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development will also have to be part of the scope of discussions in the forum, including the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns and the discussions on intergenerational solidarity.

87. Regarding the 10-year framework, resolution 67/290 gives the forum the role of providing guidance to the board of the 10-year framework and to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This should be only one component of regular discussions in the forum of sustainable production and consumption as one of the three overarching goals of sustainable development identified at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Clear lack of progress on sustainable production and consumption since 1992 and its critical importance in enabling the achievement of sustainable development goals across the board in the future militate for the strong presence of sustainable production and consumption on the forum's agenda, beyond the review of activities of the United Nations system in that area.

88. Two main angles regarding intergenerational solidarity have been examined by the United Nations system in the past. The first of these relates to issues of intergenerational distribution of income and transfers, such as safety nets for older and younger generations and the creation and viability of pension systems, in particular as they link with demographic change and other related topics. This angle is well covered in social and economic forums in the United Nations. The second angle is more specific to sustainable development and is, in fact, a defining dimension of the sustainable development approach. It concerns the right of future generations to inherit from current generations an Earth that will enable them to satisfy their needs, as highlighted in the definition of sustainable development in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and in the Rio Principles. This concern directly links with the way the interests of future generations are represented in the legal systems at all levels. On this issue, the forum can continue to play the role of convener of discussions, further reviewing progress and allowing the international community to share lessons learned and reflect on solutions.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

89. The present report shows that progress has been achieved in follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Particularly noteworthy are the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the creation of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as well as the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. The report highlights the fact that the high-level political forum will have the critical responsibility of keeping the implementation of sustainable development commitment under review, and that it will be the main platform for ensuring coherence and coordination in the post-2015 development agenda. It is therefore recommended that the General Assembly call on

Governments, organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, other relevant intergovernmental organizations, including the World Trade Organization, and major groups and other relevant stakeholders:

(a) To fully engage in and support the work of the high-political forum;

(b) To make the forum a dedicated platform for implementation of sustainable development commitments, redoubling their efforts to maintain a strong focus on implementation at all levels, including sharing of experiences;

(c) To ensure that the forum follows up to the processes and outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, by bringing cohesion and complementarity among them, especially in the context of the post-2015 development agenda;

(d) To enhance integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development by engaging with the economic, social and environmental policymaking communities more intensively and in a more integrative way;

(e) To maintain a focused, relevant and flexible agenda that will engage actors from all three dimensions of sustainable development and monitor progress;

(f) To propose possible themes and areas, including new and emerging issues, for discussion at the high-level political forum;

(g) To maintain a robust preparation process, with support from a stronger United Nations inter-agency process;

(h) To encourage and strengthen partnerships, initiatives and voluntary commitments;

(i) To ensure meaningful engagement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders;

(j) To invite the forum itself to determine how best it can deliver on these objectives through the choice of its thematic focus and by ensuring that its policy guidance draws from solid reviews of implementation, notably implementation at the national level and by the United Nations system, as well as scientific and other evidence;

(k) To call on the United Nations system to make further efforts to integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its work. The Secretary-General should continue to report on progress in this regard to the high-level political forum, including by proposing a road map and detailed recommendations concerning how the United Nations system could make rapid advances in this regard.

United Nations A/68/322

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 August 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 19 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 86 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in which the Secretary-General was invited to present a report on the need for promoting intergenerational solidarity for the achievement of sustainable development, taking into account the needs of future generations.

The report evaluates how the need for intergenerational solidarity could be addressed by the United Nations system and analyses how the issue of intergenerational solidarity is embedded in the concept of sustainable development and existing treaties, declarations, resolutions and intergovernmental decisions. It also reviews the conceptual and ethical underpinnings of intergenerational solidarity and future generations and how the issue has been taken into consideration in policymaking in a variety of institutions at the national level.

The report outlines options for possible models to institutionalize concern for future generations at the United Nations, suggesting options for the way forward.

* A/68/150.

13-42845 (E) 130913

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 86 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", in which it was agreed to consider the need for promoting intergenerational solidarity for the achievement of sustainable development, taking into account the needs of future generations, including by inviting the Secretary-General to present a report on the issue. The outcome document was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/288.

2. The purpose of the present report is to consider both the need for intergenerational solidarity, taking into account the needs of future generations, and to evaluate how this need could be addressed by the United Nations system. The report analyses how the issue of intergenerational solidarity is embedded in the concept of sustainable development and existing treaties, declarations, resolutions and intergovernmental decisions. It reviews the fundamental ethical underpinnings of intergenerational solidarity and future generations and examines how the needs of the future generations have been taken into consideration in policymaking at the national level, in a variety of institutions. Lastly, the report outlines possible models for institutionalizing concern for future generations at the United Nations, suggesting options for the way forward.

II. Conceptual framework

3. A dedication to future generations is visible worldwide and across cultures. It is a value universally shared by humanity. This value is fundamental to constitutions and international treaties; it is a driving force in the economy; and in households it manifests itself in religious beliefs, traditions and culture. Living members of a community benefit from the sacrifices and investments made by previous generations. Few would question the responsibilities that the world owes to its children and grandchildren, at least in the moral sense if not strictly in law. Our political thinking, mirroring these concerns, speaks to those obligations.

4. The foregoing notwithstanding, responsibility towards future generations, in theory and even more so in practice, is a relatively new concept in the legal and political arenas. It has been suggested that advances in science and technology have driven home the realization that future generations are vulnerable to current acts and policies.[1] Scientific inquiry allows society to understand the long-term impacts of its actions, while technological advancement means that it is in a position to mitigate harmful consequences if it so chooses.

5. Future generations are politically powerless, with the representation of their interests limited to the vicarious concern of present generations. As stated in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, entitled "Our common future", "we act as we do because we can get away with it: future generations do not vote, they have no political or financial power; they cannot challenge our decisions" (A/42/427, annex, para. 25).

[1] Ernest Partridge, "Future generations", in *A Companion to Environmental Ethics*, Dale Jamieson, ed. (Malden, Massachusetts, Blackwell Publishers, 2001).

6. Intergenerational solidarity is widely understood as social cohesion between generations. Most frequently, however, it refers to relations between the younger and older generations of those living,[2] including child-parent relationships, social participation of elderly people and children in communities, affordability of pensions and care of the elderly. Increasingly, the scope of family policies related to intergenerational solidarity has been gradually expanding, from a focus on families with young children to the inclusion of all generations, an expansion warranted by rapidly ageing societies where family-oriented policies need to take into account the changing roles and demands of all generations (see A/68/61-E/2013/3, para. 46).

7. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, states that solidarity between generations at all levels — in families, communities and nations — is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages, a major prerequisite for social cohesion and a foundation of formal public welfare and informal care systems.[3] The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2012/10, requested the Commission for Social Development to adopt advancement of social integration and intergenerational solidarity as one of three guiding themes for the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

8. In the context of sustainable development, intergenerational solidarity goes beyond relations among the currently living representatives of different generations to embrace the future generations who do not yet exist. At the World Summit for Social Development, held in 1995, countries committed themselves to creating a framework of action to, among other things, fulfil their responsibility for present and future generations by ensuring equity among generations and protecting the integrity and sustainable use of the environment.[4] In this view, humanity as a whole forms an intergenerational community in which all members respect and care for one another, achieving the common goal of survival of humankind.

9. Section III of the present report refers to existing treaties and declarations and examines their relevance and significance in elaborating the way forward when promoting intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations at the international level. It analyses some of the conceptual and ethical dimensions of the debate around future generations.

A. Conceptual and ethical dimensions

10. Fairness between generations is embedded in the concept of sustainable development; satisfying the needs of the present generation should not come at the expense of generations to come. In broad terms, the pursuit of welfare by the present generation should not diminish the opportunities of succeeding generations for pursuing a good and decent life. Concern for the needs of future generations therefore falls into the category of intergenerational equity or intergenerational justice, which is essentially the allocation of burdens and benefits across generations. Intergenerational equity has been defined as the issue of sustainable development referring, within the environmental context, to fairness in the

[2] See http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_269_en.pdf.

[3] *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 42.

[4] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 26 (b).

intertemporal distribution of the endowment with natural assets or of the rights to their exploitation.[5] Intergenerational justice is closely related but can be understood as a broader concept that involves, apart from distributive dimensions, procedural, restorative and retributive dimensions.

11. Present generations need to decide the moral ground on which to act towards future generations, especially if it involves significant sacrifices. They also need to understand why leaving the planet to their descendants in at least as good a condition as they found it is the right or good thing to do.

What do we mean by future generations?

12. Although general interest in the future and references to posterity have a long history, serious attention by philosophers to the issue of moral responsibility to future generations is quite recent. Defining the moral status of persons of the future raises unique and extraordinary moral and metaethical problems, to which conventional moral and political theories are unable to provide an adequate response.[6] Calls to act sustainably and save the planet for future generations or for our children and grandchildren appear almost interchangeable. From a moral perspective, however, there are important differences between our children and grandchildren and remote, unborn generations. For one thing, living generations are unambiguously rights holders. Before the concept of intergenerational justice is applied, there needs to be clarity about who exactly falls within the scope of the discussion. It is plausible — and squares with our intuition — that people's concern for what happens in the future and those living in the future tends to be attenuated the further into the future we go. At the same time, it has been argued that the notion that each generation holds the Earth as a trustee or steward for its descendants strikes a deep chord with all cultures, religions and nationalities. For example, the Confederation of the Six Nations of the Iroquois passed on the principle that decisions should take into account the welfare and well-being of the seventh generation.[7] Nearly all human traditions recognize that the living are sojourners on Earth and temporary stewards of its resources.[8]

13. Our moral intuitions and observations of human behaviour lead to the conclusion that many of us tend to care most deeply for those closest to us in time and space, that is, our immediate family, friends and those from groups with which we identify. Geographical — let alone temporal — distance is observed to make a difference in specific expressions of concern for our fellow humans. That said, globalization and the information and communications revolution have tended to shrink space in recent decades, arguably extending our sphere of strong empathy. Technologies have to date done little to shrink the temporal distance between present and future generations. From a moral perspective, efforts and sacrifices aimed at protecting and improving the world for the sake of our children and grandchildren are the most straightforward of actions, yet not immediately obvious are the ethical grounds on which human beings should be treated differently based

[5] *Glossary of Environment Statistics*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 67 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.XVII.12).

[6] Stephen M. Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011).

[7] See www.sehn.org/bemidjistatement.html.

[8] Edith Brown Weiss, *In Fairness to Future Generations: International Law, Common Patrimony and Intergenerational Equity* (Ardsley, New York, Transnational Publishers, 1989).

on their date of birth, given that this has no bearing on their humanity. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. The basis for our moral obligations towards future generations is thus argued to be the equal concern and respect that we owe to all humans, regardless of where and when they may have been born.

14. In the case of some global environmental problems, the consequences of our present actions will not appear for decades, or even hundreds of years. For example, some very high-risk impacts of climate change are likely not to fall on our children or grandchildren, but would affect persons born perhaps 5, or 10 or 20 generations hence.

Sacrificing the interests of current generations?

15. The sustainable development agenda is deeply intertwined with issues of intragenerational equity and justice. It is for good reason that the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development affirms that poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 2). The fair and equitable distribution of benefits and opportunities among those currently living is one of world's most difficult challenges. Addressing the needs of future generations is, however, not meaningful if not linked to addressing those of current generations. Poverty eradication is not only about intragenerational equity but also about intergenerational equity, given the strong tendency for parent-to-child transmission of poverty. This varies from one society to another depending on social mobility; however, mobility appears to be on the decline in many developed countries, at least in recent decades. The poor are likely to remain poor into the next generation.

16. The vision of sustainable development does not endorse the sacrifice of the legitimate aspirations of the poorest in the name of future generations. At the same time, this in no way implies that the needs of present generations always enjoy priority over those of future generations; at the very least, the poorest and most vulnerable should not be called upon to make sacrifices for the long-term good of humanity.

17. In a world of limited resources, the need to allocate resources among competing interests cannot simply be wished away but must be faced openly. First, this implies that the needs of future generations should be identified and articulated as precisely as possible; current generations should not forego benefits unless it can be reasonably foreseen that this would make a difference. At the same time, small gains for current generations should not be pursued when actions are strongly likely to incur large losses for future generations. Second, decisions made by present generations that materially affect the allocation of burdens and benefits between present and future generations should be arrived at in open, reasoned processes and not by means of closed or indirect systems of decision-making.

18. The point has also been made that the relationship between generations can be articulated in positive terms, with less emphasis on negative trade-offs and greater

emphasis on synergies, or win-win situations.[9] Along these lines, justice is also a matter of equal access to common resources to be shared by humankind over time, rather than just the distribution of private property. This translates to a right to a common heritage, or patrimony, which those alive today enjoy thanks to previous generations, and which should be protected and safeguarded for future generations. Such patrimony includes nature's wealth but also cultural treasures.

Future persons as holders of rights?

19. Even though intuitively many people may agree that present generations have obligations and duties to future generations, in moral and legal terms it is hard to assign moral significance to beings that do not yet exist. Simply put, it is argued that, because they do not yet exist, future persons cannot have rights: they cannot possess anything, which includes rights. In legal terms, it is argued that rights go hand-in-hand with duties; legal duties cannot exist while legal rights are absent, therefore present generations cannot have legal obligations to those of the future. If the rights-holder does not exist, it is difficult to conceive of anyone being under a corresponding duty.

20. The argument is that no particular lives in the future can be improved by present policies because, whichever policy is adopted, it will create a different set of future persons.[10]

21. One response to this view is that the link between rights and duties is not iron-clad, so that it is conceivable that persons can be subject to duties without the strict requirement of a corresponding rights holder. Thus, future generations can be considered the bearers of rights: for example, the right not to be deprived of opportunities owing to the exhaustion of natural resources or not to be harmed by a degraded environment.[1] In this case, present generations would be regarded as subject to a duty to respect these rights.

22. It has also been contended that the environmental rights of future generations might be best captured in terms of group rights, namely, intergenerational planetary rights[s] or community of rights,[11] as distinct from individual rights. There is no consensus about the rights that future people should have; with the rapid advancement of technology and changes in other aspects of human life, it is extremely difficult to claim that we can know what future people would want. A broader agreement exists, however, that there are some basic rights (to life, health, subsistence, peace, etc.) that would be relevant and important to people as biological beings at any time in the future, and that these rights should be protected by present generations insofar as they have the power to do so.

23. One influential view, communitarianism, argues that we are morally bound to future generations through shared membership in a transgenerational community.[12] According to this view, present generations are bound to future generations through cultural interaction and moral similarity; therefore, we have strong obligations to future generations as members of the same community. For some, the applicability

[9] See www.futurejustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Global-Conference-Synopsis.pdf.

[10] Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984).

[11] Alan Gewirth, *The Community of Rights* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[12] Avner de-Shalit, *Why Posterity Matters: Environmental Policies and Future Generations* (London, Routledge, 1995).

of a communitarian approach might be questioned in relation to environmental issues that are global in nature. The call of communitarians is, however, to think globally but act locally, stressing that many global environmental problems manifest both local and global causes and that international efforts to resolve these issues do not diminish the importance of local efforts or relieve local communities from their moral obligation to act to address such problems.

24. Another view provides that the main duty owed to our successors is the saving of sufficient material capital to maintain just institutions, that is, fair systems of governance, over time: the so-called principle of just savings.[13] Such savings can take various forms, from net investment in machinery and other means of production to investment in learning and education. While material capital is emphasized, this operates so that each generation preserves the gains of culture and society, maintains intact the fair systems of governance that have been established and puts aside in each period of time a suitable amount of real capital accumulation. Originally developed for a national entity, this view was subsequently extended to a global level and applied to the environmental context. The outcome of this stipulation is the fundamental principle of intergenerational equity, whereby each generation should bequeath to its successors a planet in at least as good a condition as that generation received it.[8] This general principle has been fleshed out in three parts, as follows:

(a) *Conservation of options*. Each generation should be required to conserve the diversity of the natural and cultural resource base so that it does not unduly restrict the options available to future generations for solving their problems and satisfying their own values; future generations should also be entitled to a diversity comparable to that enjoyed by previous generations;

(b) *Conservation of quality*. Each generation should be required to maintain the quality of the planet so that it is passed on in no worse a condition than that in which it was received and should be entitled to planetary quality comparable to that enjoyed by previous generations;

(c) *Conservation of access*. Each generation should provide its members with equitable rights of access to the legacy of past generations and should conserve this access for future generations.

25. It is useful to consider additional conclusions that could be drawn from this brief consideration of ethical views on the needs of future generations. First, because we cannot with great certainty ascertain the precise needs and preferences of future generations, we could in devising policies begin at the very least by taking into account two considerations: minimizing harm and doing that which benefits both present and future generations. That is, rather than seeking to identify and promote what might be the good life for future generations, the policy focus for policy from a perspective of future generations should be guided by the avoidance and minimization of harm. In practice, this would mean avoiding irreversible impacts on the ecosystems that provide the basis for human life, both now and in the future.

26. Second, consideration of the needs of future generations would favour policies that work to the advantage of both present and future generations and that, other

[13] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1971).

factors being roughly equal, are the least burdensome to the present generation. Third, where risks to the interests of future generations are reasonably clear and consequential, present generations should exercise forbearance, foregoing some benefits. This finds its expression in the precautionary principle, which is widely but not universally accepted. Activities that lead to irreversible harm to large and important ecosystems or that do significant damage to natural capital for which there is no ready substitute could be considered to fall into this category. The above considerations might also lead to taking up the options with least risk to achieve a given end.

27. Fourth, education also has a key role to play. Education is itself critical to intergenerational solidarity as the means of transmitting accumulated, or at least the most recent, scientific and other knowledge to future generations. Concern for future generations rests on an open and critical engagement with moral and ethical choices, carried out by informed stakeholders at all levels. Possible actions would involve strengthening civic education, education for sustainable development and leadership training to foster attitudinal changes that advance intergenerational solidarity and justice. In this context, it is important to promote education for sustainable development and global citizenship for children, young people and adults in order to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. This includes increased freedom and tolerance, as well as the importance of protecting, promoting and maintaining tangible (which includes both natural and cultural heritage) and intangible cultural heritage for current and future generations.

28. Fifth, long-term scientific research and development form part of an intergenerational strategy. Such research is necessary to develop substitutes for depleted resources, to extract and use resources more efficiently and to understand and manage long-term threats to environmental quality.[8] While much of the research may take place in the private sector, there is a need for public support to catalyse transformative shifts in key areas, especially where there are market failures.

B. Economics

29. Economic models have informed and guided environmental policies, including policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation, since at least the early 1990s. Problems may arise with application of this framework of analysis in relation to irreversible impacts (e.g. losses of ecosystems such as coral reefs and systems whose value cannot be captured adequately in monetary terms). Moreover, it can be argued that decisions on, for example, combating climate change or biodiversity loss, cannot be determined by the costs of action alone because the understanding of costs is informed by assumptions about what we value.

30. Cost-benefit analysis is generally perceived as an objective approach to policymaking. It has, however, been emphasized that initial assumptions on which projections are based represent value judgements.[14] Such analyses involve the comparison between the cost of a given policy and the benefit: for example, the damage avoided. Given that damage may be distant in time, it is necessary to

[14] Nicholas Stern, "Ethics, equity and the economics of climate change", Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy Working Paper No. 97 (2012). Available from www.cccep.ac.uk/Publications/Working-papers/Papers/90-99/WP97-ethics-equity-economics-of-climate-change.pdf.

quantify how much its avoidance would be worth in the present. This is done by applying a discount rate, reflecting that the more distant in time a benefit or damage avoided is, the less it is worth to us in the present given competing investment opportunities. A high discount rate implies relatively modest action to address a problem, while a low discount rate implies immediate and dramatic action. For example, a given loss incurred 100 years from now is 55 times smaller using a discount rate of 5.5 per cent compared with the result using a discount rate of 1.4 per cent. It is thus argued that, when a high discount rate is adopted in the analysis of climate change mitigation, people in the current generation are treated as more valuable than people in future generations.

31. More broadly, it has been argued that, when a policy raises predominantly normative, political and institutional questions as opposed to technical questions, cost-benefit analysis would not be effective.[15] Furthermore, the conventional cost-benefit rationale is unsuitable for the valuation of irreversibilities.[16] Overall, the rationale for selecting discount rates, whether based on observed market rates or otherwise, remains unsettled in the literature. In the context of the needs for future generations, however, there is a solid case to be made for lower discount rates, taking into account ethical concerns that the welfare of present generations should not be valued more highly than that of those in the future.

III. Existing arrangements and lessons learned

32. References to future generations are found in a range of legal instruments, including an increasing number of national constitutions. National institutions have also been established in various jurisdictions with mandates that relate to the protection of the interests of future generations.

A. Needs of future generations in international legal instruments

33. A variety of treaties and declarations at the regional and international levels already make reference to future generations.[17] The preamble to the Charter of the United Nations states that one of the founding purposes of the Organization is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment (1972) refers to future generations in the context of the environment; its principle 1 expresses the common conviction that humanity bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations. Principle 3 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) states that the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

---

[15] Jonathan S. Masur and Eric Posner, "Climate regulation and the limits of cost-benefit analysis", *California Law Review*, vol. 99, No. 6 (2011), pp. 1557-1599.

[16] German Advisory Council on Global Change, *World in Transition: Environment and Ethics*, Special Report, 1999.

[17] This review greatly benefited from the research performed by Halina Ward and Peter Roderick in connection with the discussion paper entitled "Committing to the future we want: a high commissioner for future generations at Rio+20". Available from www.fdsd.org/2012/03/committing-to-the-future-we-want/.

34. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), as well as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1994) and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management (1997), are prominent in highlighting the needs of future generations. The Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations towards Future Generations, adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1997, directly addresses the issue. Other declarations, as well as the World Charter for Nature (1982), also address the need to protect future generations.

35. Other international agreements and declarations that refer to future generations and common heritage are the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (1946); the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973); the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1968); the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (1977); the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979); the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979); the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985); the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1985); the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (1992); the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (1992); the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (1992); the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (1993); the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (1998); the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000); the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001); the WHO (World Health Organization) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (2003); the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993); the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005); the Antarctic Treaty (1959); the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (1979); the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982); and the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (1997).

36. The breadth and the number of instruments demonstrate that concern for future generations has developed as a guiding principle of international norms. The existence of these documents also shows that, at least to some extent, States are not only willing to make but have already made international commitments for the sake of future generations. These references to future generations, however, appear for the most part in the preambles of the instruments and not in their operative text. At the international level, there exists no legally binding instrument that specifically commits States to the protection of future generations.

B. Legal provisions at the national level

37. A number of countries have incorporated references to future generations in their constitutions. For instance, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, Germany, Kenya, Norway and South Africa have enshrined the rights of future generations

within their constitutions. In accordance with article 9 of the Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the responsible use of natural resources, the promotion of industrialization and the conservation of the environment for the welfare of current and future generations are among the purposes and functions of the State. In its article 317, the Constitution of Ecuador provides that, in the management of non-renewable resources, the State shall give priority to responsibility between generations, the conservation of nature, the charging of royalties or other non-tax contributions and corporate shares. Its article 400 states that the State shall exercise sovereignty over biodiversity, the administration and management of which shall be conducted on the basis of responsibility between generations. Article 110 (b) of the Constitution of Norway provides that every person has a right to an environment that is conducive to health and that natural resources are to be managed on the basis of comprehensive long-term considerations, with this right safeguarded for future generations as well. Article 20 (a) of the Basic Law of Germany provides that the State should take responsibility for protecting the natural foundations of life and animals in the interest of future generations, with the phrase "foundations of life" understood to embrace all components of the environment necessary for the maintenance of life over long periods; thus the provision places responsibility for protection of the natural environment on the State. The Constitution of South Africa states that everyone has the right to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations through reasonable legislative and other measures. Similarly, the Constitution of Kenya provides for the right to a clean and healthy environment, which includes protection of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations through legislative and other measures.

38. Examples of references to future generations are found in the constitutions of the States of Hawaii and Montana in the United States of America. Future generations are also referenced in environmental framework legislation, such as the United States National Environmental Policy Act[18] and the South African National Environmental Management Act.[19]

C. National institutions for future generations

39. Canada, Finland, Hungary, Israel, New Zealand and Wales (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) either have or have had an office that serves to protect the needs of future generations. While no specific office has been established in the Philippines, the judiciary in a well-known case accepted the protection of natural resources in the name of future generations. There are also developments in other countries, such as in Norway, regarding the establishment of an institution for future generations.

40. New Zealand established the position of Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment in 1986. While not explicitly addressing the needs of future generations, the Parliamentary Commissioner is committed to work that addresses

[18] Section 101 (a) of the Act provides that it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government, inter alia, to fulfil the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.

[19] The preamble of the Act states that everyone has the right to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations through reasonable legislative and other measures.

such needs, functioning in a manner similar to an ombudsman. The primary role of the Parliamentary Commissioner is investigative. The office collects information about the environment, reviews the Government's management of resources and inquires into specific environmental issues or problems. The Commissioner also has an advisory role, and can encourage remedial actions and make reports to the House of Representatives.

41. The Committee for the Future was established in Finland in 1993. Its role is relatively limited. Although it may investigate development factors and development models of the future and may conduct assessments of technological development and the effects on society of technology, it deliberates with the parliament only upon request.

42. In Canada, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, a position established in 1995, is located within the Office of the Auditor General and conducts performance audits. The Commissioner is responsible for assessing whether departments of the Federal Government are meeting their sustainable development objectives and for overseeing the environmental petitions process. The Commissioner may also process citizens' petitions on environmental matters in the context of sustainable development and monitor the responses of federal ministers.

43. Israel, in 2001, was the first country to establish a commission for future generations, with a judge as the commissioner. The primary function of the Commission was for the most part investigative. The Commission was given the task of reviewing the ramifications of legislation and its effects on future generations and was also tasked with defining the areas of interest to future generations. The Commission had investigative power, such as the ability to demand information from State agencies. The Commission also had considerable advisory power, however. It could provide the parliament with recommendations and voice opinions on legislative drafts and acts. In its investigative and advisory roles, the Commission also claimed a right to voice an informed opinion on legislation that might affect future generations. The delay involved in collecting data and undertaking an evaluation meant that the Commission could impact upon the drafting of legislation in a manner similar to the filibuster tactics used in the United States Senate. The first Commissioner's term ended in 2006. In 2007, the parliament disbanded the Commission.

44. Hungary established the position of Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations in 2008. The primary task of the Commissioner, one of four parliamentary ombudsmen, was to protect the constitutional right to a healthy environment. In this capacity, the Commissioner could investigate citizens' complaints on environmental issues. This investigative capacity was considerably enhanced, such as by the assignment of authority to obtain information and enter property. The other main task of the Commissioner was to advocate policy that is sustainable and considerate of the needs of future generations. To advance both of these tasks, the Commissioner was tasked with the development and collection of research and the preparation of reports on the environment, sustainability and policy development in legislation. In 2012, the Commissioner's office, along with those of the other parliamentary commissioners, was replaced by a single, broader entity, the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights. The new Commissioner is to pay special attention to the protection of the values determined as the interests of

future generations, and his or her deputy is tasked with the specific role of protecting the interests of future generations.

45. The Government of Wales, United Kingdom, which has a legal obligation to promote sustainable development, established the position of Commissioner for Sustainable Futures in April 2011. The Commissioner's primary role is to provide leadership and advice on sustainable development. The Commissioner meets regularly with stakeholders, develops voluntary partnerships and coalitions and promotes sustainable development within civil society and the Government of Wales. The Commissioner also advises the Government on policy and approaches to sustainable development, with a particular focus on long-term implementation.

46. In Norway, the Ombudsman for Children possesses statutory powers to investigate individual complaints and also monitors legislation and policy affecting children. Proposals have been made by civil society for the establishment of an ombudsman for future generations.

47. In Germany, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development, established by the parliament in 2009, is intended to serve as the advocate of long-term responsibility in the political process. Among other things, the Advisory Council provides support in the parliamentary process in regard to the Federal Government's National Sustainable Development Strategy and may also present recommendations on medium- and long-term planning. The Advisory Council evaluated the sustainability impact assessment mandated for all legislation and statutory orders. This assessment, based on the national sustainable development strategy, encompasses four areas: fairness between generations; social cohesion; quality of life; and international responsibility. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on sustainability impact assessments remain advisory in nature because the relevant parliamentary rules do not specify the degree to which its recommendations must be taken into account by other parliamentary committees.

48. A number of initiatives and institutions relating to the needs of future generations exist at various levels. One example is the Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations,[20] comprising a number of eminent persons, which aims to foster longer-term thinking and to identify ways forward in key areas, such as climate, trade, security and in other negotiations. The Commission is due to report towards the end of 2013. Another is the inaugural report of the Australian National Sustainability Council, which examines the evidence behind the trends, issues and challenges affecting the environment, society, economy and collective well-being as a basis for discussion of the type of society that Australians want for themselves and for future generations.

D. Children and young people

49. The welfare of future generations is in a large part determined by our treatment of children of current generations, which means that caring for future generations should have a special focus on investing in the human rights and development of the children of today. Concern for children in the context of intergenerational justice has surfaced in international human rights instruments, notably the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[20] See www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/commission.

50. Understanding linkages between parents and children is crucial. Studies confirm strong connections between maternal and child health, as well as the educational level of mother and child, especially in developing countries.[21] Parental well-being determines to a great extent options available to the children, including mechanisms of intergenerational poverty transmission. Maternal health and education, as well as the overall quality of parent-child relationships, should be addressed as an integral component and a crucial contributor to intergenerational solidarity.

51. Another important aspect of intergenerational solidarity is the participation of children and young people in the implementation of sustainable development activities. As recognized by leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the voices, choices and participation of children and young people are critical to a sustainable future. Indeed, paragraph 50 of the outcome document of the Conference, entitled "The future we want", is very explicit:

> We stress the importance of the active participation of young people in decision-making processes, as the issues we are addressing have a deep impact on present and future generations and as the contribution of children and youth is vital to the achievement of sustainable development. We also recognize the need to promote intergenerational dialogue and solidarity by recognizing their views.

52. It is important to mention that, during the Conference, it was the civil society major group for children and youth, together with the Alliance for Future Generations, which put forward the proposal for a high commissioner for future generations. Children of today, whether subsumed into future generations or not, deserve significant attention in the context of sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda.

E. Proposals relating to a high commissioner for future generations

53. At its second session, in March 2011, the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development decided to invite all Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system and stakeholders to provide their inputs and contributions for inclusion in a compilation document to serve as the basis for the preparation of a zero draft of the Conference outcome document (A/CONF.216/PC/9, decision 2/1).[22] In their contributions, several Member States stressed the need for the Conference to address the needs and rights of future generations. In this regard, a proposal was put forward for an institution to safeguard the long-term interest and needs of future generations at the global level. While echoed and supported by a number of Governments and many civil society groups, the proposal for a high commissioner for future generations was spearheaded by the major group for children and youth and the Alliance for Future Generations.

[21] Uchenna Onuzo and others, *Intergenerational Equity: Understanding the Linkages between Parents and Children: A Systematic Review* (London School of Economics and Political Science, April 2012). Available from www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/LSE_Capstone_Intergenerational_Equity.pdf.

[22] All submissions are available from www.uncsd2012.org/compdocument.html.

54. The major group for children and youth called for the establishment, at the national level, of ombudspersons for future generations who would be mandated to provide an assessment of the long-term impacts of public policies and legislative proposals. They would also respond to citizens' petitions, investigating claims of environmental crimes and offences and engaging in either conciliation or litigation. This call was supported by other stakeholder groups, as was the need for independent actors with legal powers. The establishment of these ombudspersons would be partly supported by the high commissioner for future generations whose office would have both an agenda-setting and advisory role.

55. The call was reiterated in the declaration adopted at the sixty-fourth annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations, held in Bonn, Germany, from 3 to 5 September 2011 (A/66/750, annex). The declaration called for the establishment, at the global, national and local levels, of ombudspersons for future generations who would advocate sustainable development, as envisaged and defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development, with the aim of enhancing the well-being and prospects of present and future generations to meet their needs, as well as serve as an auditor at the heart of government and deal with citizens' complaints.

56. As argued by many civil society groups, a high commissioner would further the global objectives of intergenerational justice by encouraging a focus on issues that are of critical importance to the well-being of future generations but that are often sidelined within the structure and procedures of current political and legal systems. The existence of such an office at the United Nations would help to address, in a focused manner, the long-term consequences of present-day actions by drawing attention to future impacts in tangible, non-abstract terms and by rallying support for the integration of sustainability into planning decisions by Governments, businesses and individuals. The office would also play an advocacy role by highlighting the moral imperative of leaving behind a healthy world in which future generations would live out their lives. Lastly, such an office might function best in the context of the United Nations, where the vision of a better tomorrow and planning for future generations are in keeping with the Charter and are among the driving values of the Organization.[23]

57. Two high commissioners already exist within the United Nations system: the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, since 1951, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, since 1993. Although neither model can be considered a potential analogue, it is argued that the elements of their existing responsibilities could offer direct inspiration for the powers and responsibilities of a high commissioner for future generations. It is proposed that the core powers and responsibilities of a high commissioner for future generations encompass: (a) international agenda-setting and leadership; (b) monitoring, early warning and review; (c) public participation; (d) capacity for innovation at the national and subnational levels; (e) public understanding and evidence; and (f) reporting.[23]

58. As presented, a high commissioner for future generations, as an international entity within the United Nations system, would have a scope of action significantly

[23] Discussion paper submitted to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. See note 17.

different from that of the national institutions that serve the needs of future generations. Proponents maintain that the political dynamics, responsibilities and powers of national institutions would largely be absent at the international level, with a high commissioner playing a more limited role. A review of national institutions, while useful for several reasons, should not be regarded as necessarily reflecting or predicting the difficulties, successes or functions of an international institution.

59. National attempts to institutionalize concern for future generations are, however, illustrative of factors that may also be at play in the establishment of a similar institution at the international level. First, the number of countries that have established such institutions, in various forms, may be considered relevant. Second, how the idea has been implemented structurally and procedurally can provide a useful guide to key considerations for policymakers. Lastly, the practical success and difficulties can highlight potential areas of concern.

60. Various other approaches could be advanced to meet the needs of future generations, including raising awareness of and increasing the focus on future generations within existing institutions and offices, recognizing the needs of young people and future generations in the sustainable development goals, or establishing a special envoy. Proponents for the establishment of a high commissioner for future generations, however, argue that the more limited or aspirational approaches, while beneficial, have generally proved to be ineffective in addressing the needs of future generations.[23]

61. At the Conference, closely related to the call for a high commissioner was the proposal for a sustainable development champion who could raise awareness and mobilize political support. In a similar way, some stakeholders called for appointment of a high-level official to lead a review of the achievements and shortcomings of United Nations programmes designed to support young people and future generations and to champion recommendations on how to address more effectively the challenges hindering the development and participation of young people.

IV. Options for a way forward

62. The present report discusses multiple ways in which Member States and the United Nations system could enhance intergenerational solidarity, drawing on lessons learned at analogous institutions at the subnational, national and regional levels. Within this broad context, a range of options could be considered by Member States, including those set out below.

63. *Commissioner*. During the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, one of the proposals put forward, which received strong support from civil society, was the establishment of a high commissioner for future generations:

(a) The high commissioner could act as an advocate for intergenerational solidarity through interactions with Member States and other stakeholders, as well as across United Nations entities and specialized agencies;

(b) Such an office could undertake research and foster expertise on policy practices to enhance intergenerational solidarity in the context of sustainable

development at the international, regional, national and subnational levels and disseminate such expertise, as deemed appropriate;

(c) The office could, at the request of the United Nations or any of its entities, the specialized agencies or affiliated organizations, offer advice on the implementation of existing intergovernmental commitments to enhance the rights and address the needs of future generations;

(d) The office could, upon request, also offer its support and advice, including to individual Member States, on best practices and on policy measures to enhance intergenerational solidarity.

64. The office would not have a field presence or receive reports from Member States, unless on a voluntary basis. The establishment of a high commissioner and the related office would require adequate financing in order to ensure the quality of its services.

65. *Special envoy*. A related option, but with less of an institutional footprint, could be the appointment of a special envoy of the Secretary-General for future generations. The special envoy would serve as a global independent advocate for intergenerational solidarity, with a particular concern for the welfare of future generations, and would promote and facilitate the inclusion of best practices in policymaking at all levels. The special envoy would promote and facilitate the engagement and full participation of all stakeholders in United Nations processes related to intergenerational solidarity and future generations, such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and conduct public advocacy to raise awareness of the measures needed at the global level. The special envoy would report annually to the General Assembly and also, upon request, to the high-level political forum. The special envoy would be appointed for a fixed period of time. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth is tasked with advocating the needs of today's young people, namely, education, employment and respect for their rights. The mandate of a special envoy on future generations, while to some degree encompassing the needs of young people, would not be limited to the needs of a particular generation. The role of such an envoy would be to consider the impact of a far broader range of considerations, touching potentially also on the needs of future generations.

66. *Agenda item in high-level political forum*. The high-level political forum could address intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations as a recurring agenda item; this would serve to keep the issue on the agenda of international decision-making and promote its integration within the sustainable development framework. Specifically, intergenerational solidarity and future generations could be addressed through thematic plenary or round-table discussions and result in possible recommendations that could be included in the forum's declarations.

67. *Inter-agency coordination with regard to the needs of future generations*. The Secretary-General could be invited to promote intergenerational solidarity and future generations within the United Nations system through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its mechanisms so as to ensure policy coherence within the system.

Recommendation

68. **Member States may wish to invite the high-level political forum to consider, at its second meeting, in 2014, the possible institutional arrangements proposed herein and other suitable mechanisms to promote intergenerational solidarity for the achievement of sustainable development, taking into account the needs of future generations.**